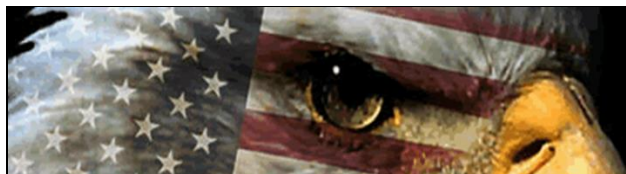



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## Events, Opportunities

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HEADLINE	08/23 WA AG opposes major gas pipeline project
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/environment/washington-ag-west-coast-states-oppose-major-gas-pipeline-expansion-project/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/environment/washington-ag-west-coast-states-oppose-major-gas-pipeline-expansion-project/</a>
GIST	Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson is leading the three West Coast states in a challenge to a \$335 million pipeline improvement project to increase the flow of Canadian natural gas to the Northwest and California.

[The Monday filing with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission](#) from Ferguson and the Oregon and California justice departments opposes the GTN Xpress project and represents an escalation of state-level efforts to block development of new fossil fuel infrastructure.

GTN, a subsidiary of TC Energy, brings in natural gas from Alberta, Canada, via a 1,377-mile pipeline that cuts through Idaho, Eastern Washington and Oregon to link up with California pipeline networks.

In 2019, TC Energy announced a project to boost capacity and reliability largely by improving three compressor stations.

The project would increase greenhouse gas emissions by the equivalent of 3.47 million metric tons of carbon dioxide annually for the next three decades, according to the Monday filing.

Ferguson said that was the equivalent of adding 754,000 internal combustion engine cars to the road, and “undermines Washington state’s efforts to fight climate change.”

In a statement Monday, TC Energy defended the project as important to address future growth in demand. “We are proud of the support GTNXP [Gas Transmission Northwest XPRESS] Project has received from labor, key communities, stakeholders and neighbors, and we are committed to continuing our dialogue as we create long-term opportunities, including jobs and economic benefits in the region,” the statement said.

The project is under review by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, which earlier this year released a draft environmental study. It found the project operations and downstream emissions could potentially increase Idaho’s greenhouse gas emissions by 16%, Washington’s by 3.8% and Oregon’s by 7.7% based on 2019 levels. The draft study did not try to characterize the significance of its climate change impacts.

Brionna Aho, a spokesperson for Ferguson, said the attorney general took action under the office’s “independent authority” and not on behalf of any state agencies.

California, Oregon and Washington all are trying to clamp down on greenhouse gas emissions by shifting from fossil fuels to more renewable fuels, which would increasingly supplant natural gas consumption.

But natural gas remains a big part of the Northwest energy mix, helping to generate electric power and heat homes and fuel industries. When it leaks unburnt into the atmosphere, the methane in natural gas is a much more potent, although shorter-lived, greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide.

When natural gas combusts, it emits less carbon dioxide than coal and crude oil, producing an equivalent of the amount of energy, and the natural gas industry has argued that should play a key role in helping transition to cleaner fuels.

Critics of the project cheered the states’ opposition filing, and said that state measures seeking to clamp down of fossil fuel use should lead to declining demand for natural gas.

“We just really don’t have any wiggle room for any more fossil fuel infrastructure if we are going to meet our climate goals,” said Emily Moore, a senior researcher at the Seattle-based Sightline Institute fossil fuel transition program.

Lauren Goldberg, executive director of Columbia Riverkeeper, which has a long history of fighting proposed fossil fuel projects in the Northwest, said the Monday action is a “game-changer.”

“GTN’s proposal flies in the face of state actions to combat climate change,” Goldberg said.

Dan Kirschner, executive director of the Portland-based Northwest Gas Association, which represents Northwest natural gas companies and pipelines, said that the pipeline improvements are needed to accommodate growth in the region.

	Kirschner dismissed the filing by Ferguson and Oregon and California state officials as “more like a PR exercise than anything substantive.”
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HEADLINE	<b>08/24 Pay cut to keep working from home?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/business/you-may-soon-be-asked-to-take-a-pay-cut-to-keep-working-from-home/">https://www.seattletimes.com/business/you-may-soon-be-asked-to-take-a-pay-cut-to-keep-working-from-home/</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — Working from home during the pandemic became a surprising success.</p> <p>Many workers enjoyed a better quality of life plus savings on commuting, office wardrobe and other expenses. Companies boosted productivity and lowered costs.</p> <p>Now as remote work looks likely to survive in some form for the foreseeable future, a battle is starting to brew over who should pocket those savings, with some employers arguing that working from home is a benefit that should be offset by lower salaries.</p> <p>With the pandemic easing, more companies are calling workers back <a href="#">to the office</a>. Even so, about 30% of all paid workdays are still being done from home, up from just 5% before the COVID-19 outbreak, according to the <a href="#">Working From Home Research Project</a> led by economists at Stanford and the University of Chicago.</p> <p>Paying remote workers less is a practice that is already catching on abroad. In Britain, the law firm Stephenson Harwood recently announced that employees could work full time from home on the condition that they take a 20% pay cut.</p> <p>Right now, such arrangements seem rare in the U.S., probably because of the tight labor market. But that could change in the event of a recession as employers eye how remote working can lower labor costs and boost the bottom line.</p> <p>The Working From Home project found that 4 in 10 employers planned to use remote work as a way to ease overall wage-growth pressures — though not necessarily by slashing salaries of existing employees. Companies, for example, can fill new openings with remote workers in cheaper markets.</p> <p>According to a <a href="#">survey</a> by the software and data firm Payscale, a little more than 60% of employers said last summer that they were not considering lowering pay for future employees who work partly or fully from home.</p> <p>But a significant 14% of employers said they were planning to cut wages for teleworkers in lower-cost areas, and 17% said they were undecided.</p> <p>In dollar terms, <a href="#">economists estimate</a> that the value to teleworkers amounts to as much as 7.3% of their earnings.</p> <p>“Some employers would like [working from home] to be seen as a benefit or a perk, and they expect employees to feel the same way,” said Laura Sherbin, a managing director at Seramount, a workplace research and consulting firm.</p> <p>But the benefits of teleworking are by no means one-sided. In many cases, employers have reaped savings as well.</p> <p>In addition to productivity gains, there is evidence that teleworkers actually spend more time on the job than do workers in the office. Some companies also have enjoyed savings by cutting back on rent and other expenses associated with maintaining a full-scale office.</p>

Salaries in the U.S. have long reflected the living costs and competitiveness of the area where a workplace is situated.

Even before the pandemic, some companies adjusted salaries for employees who requested to move to lower-cost markets. The practice has become more common in the last two years, led by tech companies, including Google, Facebook and Twitter.

Although remote workers often didn't like the pay cut, it didn't create a huge backlash, partly because people relocating to cheaper towns understood that they might still be able to have the same purchasing power.

But the practice raises vexing questions about workplace fairness: Should employees at the same company doing the same job be paid differently because one chooses to live in Fresno and the other in Manhattan Beach? Should workers who move to more expensive markets get a raise?

Sherbin recalled that a senior employee at one large company in Washington agreed to a big pay cut to relocate to Georgia for personal reasons and telework from there. But more than a year later, when he moved back to the Washington area, his employer refused to bump his salary back up.

"What the company said to him was, 'But, yeah, you could have stayed in Georgia. We're not asking you to come back to the office,'" Sherbin said.

Compensation experts say that demanding teleworkers take less pay risks undercutting the biggest gains of a remote-work option — enhancing productivity by being able to attract skilled workers and minimizing costly turnover.

"That feels like a shell game to me. I don't like it," said David Buckmaster, a senior compensation director at Wildlife Studios. "It could be demoralizing."

Labor unions are beginning to take notice. In Seattle, hundreds of public employees who have been working from home since the coronavirus outbreak in 2020 [recoiled at the mayor's return-to-the-office policy](#), forcing the city to bargain with union representatives on telework policies.

Although Seattle's current negotiations don't involve pay structures for remote workers, that is something labor officials elsewhere are concerned about, seeing it as a potentially contentious issue down the road.

"Is this considered a benefit? That's one of the things we struggle over," said an official at the Communications Workers of America, noting that some union workers at call centers don't have the capacity to work from home. AT&T, which recently extended its agreement with the CWA over telework, said its policies and wages have remained the same regardless of work location.

Many workers say they are willing to accept some trade-offs.

Tracey Parsons, 46, a translator for the United Nations who lives north of New York City in the suburb of New Rochelle, works three days from home and two in the U.N.'s Manhattan offices.

"I would definitely take a pay cut, not that I think it would be fair," she said.

Parsons figures the hybrid work schedule amounts to hundreds of extra dollars a month — if she counts the money saved on train fares, lunches and everything else involved in going to the office.

But its value is potentially far bigger, she said. She and her stay-at-home husband would like to move farther north, where housing is cheaper and the couple could build a better future for their 8-year-old son, who has a disability.

“The positive consequences and benefits of this situation are enormous,” Parsons said. However, she wasn’t confident that she would be able to work three days from home on a permanent basis. The U.N. went from requiring one day in the office last fall to two days this year.

Raphael Kelly, an operations manager at FedEx, doesn’t think employers should put a monetary value on telework as they do for health benefits. At the same time, she said she would understand if companies wanted to consider working from home as part of an employee’s compensation package.

“I think it is a perk and a benefit,” said Kelly, 47, who has been working full time from her home in Haymarket, Va., since 2012. “And the perk is that you can be accessible to your family, you’re able to put your dinner on during your breaks, and it’s a benefit also because it’s work-life balance.”

Kelly manages a team of 25 people who went fully remote after the pandemic started. But since early summer, they have started returning to company buildings on a hybrid basis. “They are not happy,” she said.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Seattle workers agree pre-Covid office gone</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/business/coming-in-or-staying-home-seattle-workers-agree-pre-covid-office-is-gone/">https://www.seattletimes.com/business/coming-in-or-staying-home-seattle-workers-agree-pre-covid-office-is-gone/</a>
GIST	<p>After two years of overly optimistic forecasts, blown deadlines, backtracking and pushback, it’s fair to say the return to the office isn’t going as planned.</p> <p>In downtown Seattle, offices are just 42% as full as they were before COVID-19, according to the latest <a href="#">data</a> from the Downtown Seattle Association. That’s an improvement over the previous four months, when it averaged 35%, and it’s in line with a 10-city average tracked by Kastle Systems.</p> <p>But it’s still well short of return-to-office goals of many employers, a majority of which hoped to bring workers back at least 2½ days a week or more by now, according to a DSA survey in December.</p> <p>Our slow walk back to the office is raising a lot of questions. About office space demand by big employers like <a href="#">Amazon</a> and Microsoft. About the direction of <a href="#">a regional transit strategy created before COVID upended commutes</a>. About the future of downtown retailers and other businesses in an economy already burdened by a pandemic, <a href="#">inflation</a> and, now, fears of a recession.</p> <p>But it’s also revealing sharp divisions among office-based workers themselves over how, and where, they want to work.</p> <p>While many remote employees have been ready, and sometimes desperate, to return to the office, others are kicking and screaming the whole way. They’ve resisted return-to-office mandates, bargained for exemptions or even threatened to quit, as happened recently with <a href="#">Boeing</a> and <a href="#">the city of Seattle</a>.</p> <p>We asked Seattle-area workers how their journeys back are — or aren’t — going. Most didn’t want their names or the names of their employers used, for fear of angering higher-ups or colleagues. Their stories help explain why returning has so thoroughly divided the business community, and why it’s unlikely to be resolved anytime soon.</p> <p><b>“You’re feeding off your co-workers when you’re all in the office”</b></p> <p>For workers who wanted to return to the office full or part time, the appeal of going back ranged from the profound to the mundane. Several offered the now-familiar rationales of escaping the distractions or isolation of the home office. For other return-to-office advocates, the motivations were more pragmatic: The office makes it easier to do their jobs.</p>

Colton Teglovic, an associate director at the Seattle office of commercial real estate brokerage Savills, said the office is where he can more easily gather the tips and other business intel crucial to landing complicated leasing deals.

As important, being surrounded by other brokers generates a competitive energy that's essential in commissioned-based sales, and which doesn't come across over Zoom. "You're feeding off your co-workers when you're all in the office," Teglovic says. "And trying to do that [when] you're by yourself in your apartment — it's harder."

For Mohammed, who works with the city of Seattle and asked that his last name not be used, getting back in office is key to improving his team's collaboration, which suffered during the pandemic as colleagues tried to "do everything through a screen," he said. "How can you build that type of culture of work when people don't get to see each other?"

Others said being back helped their careers. For Kevin, an Amazon engineer who'd returned to his Seattle office in 2021, being in person made it easier for him to interview for a new position and also was key in a colleague's promotion. "You need to be in the office so your boss knows who you are," Kevin said. "Otherwise, you can just kind of disappear."

The motivation was even more basic for Zach, a Seattle-based Google employee who recently went from mostly remote to a required three days a week. "Google gives us free food," he said.

For some, the journey back has been a lonely one. Even on a busy day, Mohammed, the local government employee, says he still sees only a few dozen workers on his floor "where there used to be 400 people, easily."

#### **"I didn't want this so much"**

To return-to-office skeptics, of course, the office looks much less inviting.

Some voiced specific material or physical concerns, such as fear of catching the coronavirus in the office or on public transit.

"People on my team are not OK with going in, given that COVID is still going around," said an engineer at Amazon Web Services. They said their team was expected to return to the office two to three days a week starting this fall.

Others didn't want to resume their long commutes. Working from home "added so much time back to my life," said Emily, who works at a Seattle technology hardware firm. Others said working from home had been the equivalent of a pay raise due to avoided commuting costs — a raise they would now be giving up by returning to the office.

Other skeptics found that the office now felt too distracting for intense, concentrated work.

Rebecca, who works for a Seattle-area health care organization, was initially excited to see colleagues in person again — but soon found herself resenting the constant interruptions by "people standing by your cube and talking or just coming by to chat while you're working on something," she said. "It was like, maybe I didn't want this so much."

For other office doubters, the objection was less about coming back to the office than it was about how their employers had managed, or mismanaged, the return.

Some complained that employers' policies were unfair or inconsistently applied. Several described tensions between those who had been required to return and colleagues who were allowed to stay remote. One example of the latter: employees hired remotely during the pandemic who had negotiated permission to remain in their current out-of-area location.



Other mandated returnees felt their employers' stated rationale for working in person, such as better collaboration, hadn't materialized because managers couldn't ensure a critical mass of "hybrid" workers in the office on any given day.

"If one person on your team doesn't go in, then the next person's like, 'Oh, well, if he's not here, or she's not going again, then I have no reason to go in,'" said the AWS engineer, who estimates his own offices are around 25% full.

Under those circumstances, mandates for workers are just "making them uncomfortable," said the AWS engineer. "They're probably going to try to switch teams or they are just going to leave the company."

#### **"We've had our taste of freedom now"**

For advocates and skeptics alike, there were a few key factors that had an outsize effect on how effectively return-to-office strategies played with employees.

One was transparency. Some skeptics said their objections were compounded by explanations that felt contrived or unrelated to their jobs.

When Boeing announced that remote 737 engineers had to work in-office four or more days a week, several engineers said they were told it was partly because airline executives who'd visited the company's offices, as one engineer put it, "weren't happy ... seeing empty engineering sections."

Also galling were employer claims that working in person was necessary to improve productivity — especially when so many employers had spent much of the pandemic lauding remote employees' heroic productivity.

One of the biggest factors for return-to-office failure or success, workers felt, was flexibility.

High marks went to employers that allowed returning workers to choose their office days or were willing to adapt policies to reflect changing conditions.

Sam, who works for a Seattle-area consulting firm, said his company reopened its offices on a voluntary basis but postponed its final return policy until next year so managers could "see how the pandemic actually plays out."

Management's objective, Sam said, is that "we're going to see what people naturally choose to do, and then we're going to develop a policy out of that."

More broadly, employees said they appreciated hearing employers acknowledge that COVID had fundamentally changed assumptions about how and where work can happen.

The fact that so many workers were able to do their jobs remotely for two years has weakened the argument that being in-office all week "is the best way for everyone to get work done," says Emily, the Seattle hardware firm employee.

They also appreciated employers that recognized just how fundamentally the pandemic changed how many employees now see the office.

Even the most loyal and dedicated workers are unlikely to forget the convenience, time savings and other benefits of not having to go into an office five days a week. "It would take a lot to get me back" full time, Emily says. "We've had our taste of freedom now."

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SOURCE	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ukraine-girds-more-violence-independence-day-wars-six-month-mark-2022-08-23/">https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ukraine-girds-more-violence-independence-day-wars-six-month-mark-2022-08-23/</a>
GIST	<p>KYIV, Aug 24 (Reuters) - Ukraine was "reborn" when Russia invaded six months ago, President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said on Wednesday, marking 31 years of his country's independence from the Moscow-controlled Soviet Union with a vow to drive Russian forces out completely.</p> <p>After days of warnings that Moscow could use the anniversary of Ukraine's Independence Day to launch more missile attacks on major cities, the second biggest city Kharkiv was under curfew after months of bombardment.</p> <p>The anniversary fell exactly six months after Russia sent tens of thousands of troops into Ukraine. Celebrations were cancelled but many people marked the day by wearing vishivankas - embroidered shirts that are part of Ukraine's national dress.</p> <p>In an emotional speech to his compatriots, Zelenskiy said the attack had revived the nation's spirit.</p> <p>"A new nation appeared in the world on Feb. 24 at 4 in the morning. It was not born, but reborn. A nation that did not cry, scream or take fright. One that did not flee. Did not give up. And did not forget," he said.</p> <p>The 44-year-old leader, speaking in front of Kyiv's central monument to independence in his trademark combat fatigues, vowed to recapture occupied areas of eastern Ukraine as well as the Crimean peninsula, which Russia annexed in 2014.</p> <p>"We will not sit down at the negotiating table out of fear, with a gun pointed at our heads. For us, the most terrible iron is not missiles, aircraft and tanks, but shackles. Not trenches, but fetters," he said.</p> <p>He and his wife later attended a service in Kyiv's St. Sophia cathedral along with religious leaders from all of Ukraine's major faiths.</p> <p>Russia has made few advances in Ukraine in recent months, after its troops were pushed back from Kyiv in the early weeks of the war. Ukrainian soldiers on the front line in the east said they were more motivated than their enemy.</p> <p>"All of our people are cheering for us," a soldier called Yevhen told Reuters, declining to give his last name. "The whole country is, and other countries who help us too. Our fighting spirit is greater than theirs."</p> <p>Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu told a meeting of defence ministers in Uzbekistan that Russia had deliberately slowed down what it refers to as its "special military operation" in Ukraine to avoid civilian casualties.</p> <p><b>WARNINGS</b></p> <p>On Tuesday evening, Zelenskiy warned of the possibility of "repugnant Russian provocations" and on Wednesday, Ukraine's military urged people to take air raid warnings seriously, reporting new air and missile attacks on civilian buildings.</p> <p>The war has killed thousands of civilians, forced more than a third of Ukraine's 41 million people from their homes, left cities in ruins, and shaken the global economy. It is largely at a standstill with no immediate prospect of peace talks.</p> <p>As well as Crimea, Russian forces have seized areas of the south including the Black Sea and Sea of Azov coasts, and chunks of the eastern Donbas region comprising the provinces of Luhansk and Donetsk.</p> <p>Almost 9,000 Ukrainian military personnel have been killed in the war, its military said this week. Kyiv says the invasion is an unprovoked act of imperial aggression.</p>



Russia has not publicised its losses but U.S. intelligence estimates 15,000 killed in what Moscow describes as an operation necessitated by threats to its security.

Moscow has set jail terms of five years for anyone referring to its actions in Ukraine as an invasion.

Russian opposition politician Yevgeny Roizman was shown being detained at his home in a video published on social media on Wednesday, telling reporters he was being arrested "basically for one phrase, 'the invasion of Ukraine'".

Moscow has installed officials in areas of Ukraine it controls but some have been assassinated. The head of the town of Mykhailivka in the Russian-controlled part of Zaporizhzhia region was killed by a car bomb on Wednesday.

Ukraine declared independence from the Soviet Union in August 1991 after a failed putsch by Communist hardliners in Moscow, and its population voted overwhelmingly for independence in a referendum that December.

#### NUCLEAR PLANT HOPES

Both sides have accused the other of firing missiles and artillery at the Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in southern Ukraine, Europe's biggest, raising fears of a nuclear catastrophe.

International Atomic Energy Agency chief Rafael Grossi said the U.N. nuclear watchdog hoped to gain access within days if negotiations succeeded. The United Nations has called for the area to be demilitarised.

Western countries offered Ukraine more military support, with Norway saying it and Britain would supply micro drones to help with target identification and the United States expected to announce a new security package of about \$3 billion.

The Secretary General of the NATO Western defence alliance told Ukrainians they were an inspiration to the world.

"You can count on NATO's support. For as long as it takes," Jens Stoltenberg said in a video message.

Advanced U.S. missile systems appear to have helped Ukraine strike deep behind the front lines in recent months, taking out ammunition dumps and command posts.

In the latest mysterious fire at a Russian military facility, Russian officials said ammunition stored in the south near the border with Ukraine spontaneously combusted on Tuesday.

Vyacheslav Gladkov, the governor of Belgorod region, blamed hot weather for the fire, drawing ridicule from Ukraine's defence ministry on Twitter.

"The five main causes of sudden explosions in Russia are: winter, spring, summer, autumn and smoking," it said.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/24 Fighting shatters lull in Ethiopia's Tigray</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://apnews.com/article/africa-social-media-kenya-ethiopia-35f32d3db3aa5d568abf23b7e616a5c4">https://apnews.com/article/africa-social-media-kenya-ethiopia-35f32d3db3aa5d568abf23b7e616a5c4</a>
GIST	<p>NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Ethiopia's military has launched a "large-scale" offensive for the first time in a year in the country's northern Tigray region, Tigray authorities alleged Wednesday, while the government countered that Tigray forces attacked first.</p> <p>The renewed conflict in Tigray is a significant setback to mediation efforts and humanitarian work to reach millions of people starved of food and other needs.</p>

The claims followed months of regrouping by one of Africa's largest militaries. Ethiopia's military this week warned the public against any reporting of troop movements.

The Tigray conflict began in November 2020, killing thousands of people in Africa's second most populous country, and it calmed in recent months amid slow-moving mediation efforts. But last week, the spokeswoman for Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed asserted to journalists that Tigray authorities were "refusing to accept peace talks."

An Aug. 23 letter signed by Tigray leader Debretsion Gebremichael and shared with The Associated Press says Tigray leaders had "conducted two rounds of confidential face-to-face talks with senior military and civilian officials," the first confirmation of direct talks. But the letter says "unacceptable conditions have been inserted into the peace process," and it urges the international community to step in quickly.

The Tigray military command's statement Wednesday said Ethiopian forces, along with Amhara special forces and Amhara militias, "have started a large-scale attack around 5:00 a.m. in the direction of Alamata, southern Tigray." Tigray forces spokesman Getachew Reda tweeted that the offensive followed a "week-long provocation" by forces in the neighboring Amhara region.

Ethiopian military spokesman Getnet Adane did not respond to questions. The government's communication service in a statement asserted that the Tigray forces launched attacks Wednesday morning. It said if attacks continue, "the government will take measures to save the country ... and also bring (Tigray forces) to the negotiating table whether it likes it or not."

Tigray forces last week warned of an impending offensive. In a Facebook post Tuesday, Ethiopia's army rejected allegations of a military buildup or attacks and claimed the Tigray forces were "engaged in pre-conflict noise." The post also warned against spreading "secrets of the army."

Ethiopia's government has said it's ready for talks but insists the African Union must lead mediation efforts. Tigray authorities have criticized the continental body's efforts and urgently sought the resumption of telephone, banking and other basic services that have been largely cut off since the war began.

Earlier this month, World Health Organization director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, an ethnic Tigrayan, described the crisis in Tigray as "the worst disaster on Earth" and wondered aloud if the reason global leaders have not responded was due to "the color of the skin of the people in Tigray."

Humanitarian aid began flowing to Tigray earlier this year, but a report by the World Food Program last week said that with little fuel allowed into the region to deliver supplies, "this is yet to translate into increased humanitarian assistance." The U.N. agency said "rates of malnutrition have skyrocketed," with 29% of children malnourished and 2.4 million people severely food insecure.

The AU envoy, former Nigerian President Olesgun Obasanjo, and his spokesman didn't respond to questions Wednesday and have said little about mediation efforts since they began.

The new fighting comes as the president of neighboring Kenya, who has tried to mediate with U.S. support, prepares to leave office.

The renewed attacks are a "deafening warning to the key international and regional actors that they must immediately ensure peace talks actually occur," said analyst William Davison with the International Crisis Group. "They should accordingly instruct the belligerents to issue all of their demands when at the negotiating table, rather than making them preconditions for talks."

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HEADLINE	08/23 NM record-setting wildfire 100% contained
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SOURCE	<a href="https://apnews.com/article/floods-wildfires-mountains-fires-new-mexico-1b4102ee2d1ab5c5a0af304df0cbf720">https://apnews.com/article/floods-wildfires-mountains-fires-new-mexico-1b4102ee2d1ab5c5a0af304df0cbf720</a>
GIST	<p>ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — More than four grueling months and \$300 million later, the federal government has declared the largest wildfire in New Mexico’s recorded history 100% contained, a notable milestone but just another step in what local residents and officials say will be a long journey toward recovery.</p> <p>The blaze was sparked in the spring by <a href="#">two errant prescribed fires</a> conducted by the U.S. Forest Service. More than 530 square miles (1,373 square kilometers) of the Rocky Mountain foothills burned, hundreds of homes were destroyed, livelihoods were lost and <a href="#">drinking water supplies were contaminated</a>.</p> <p>Local officials say there are years of work ahead of them to restore the landscape and protect against post-fire flooding.</p> <p>San Miguel County Manager Joy Ansley and her team have been working nonstop since the first plumes of smoke began rising from the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. They helped coordinate the evacuation of thousands of people from small mountain villages and worked with the state and the city of Las Vegas as flames approached.</p> <p>With the summer rainy season in full swing, Ansley said parts of northern New Mexico are flooding on a weekly basis.</p> <p>“It’s going to be a long process and just because the fire is contained, we’re certainly not out of the woods,” she said Tuesday.</p> <p>In addition to costs related to fighting the fire, federal emergency managers have paid out more than \$4.5 million in aid to affected individuals and households and \$6.7 million in low-interest loans for small businesses.</p> <p>While more than 1,200 applications for individual assistance have been vetted, the Federal Emergency Management Agency would not say how many total applications have been received or denied.</p> <p>Some residents have voiced frustrations about denials over a lack of having a street address for their rural properties. Others have complained that federal officials don’t understand rural life in northern New Mexico and how fallout from the fire has affected them.</p> <p>New Mexico’s major disaster declaration has been expanded to include flooding, mudflows and debris flows directly related to the wildfires. Dasha Castillo, a spokesperson for FEMA, said residents who already applied for wildfire disaster assistance just need to update their original application to include flooding or other damage.</p> <p>Castillo encouraged people to <a href="#">contact FEMA</a> if they applied and haven’t heard back.</p> <p>Legislation is pending in Congress that would authorize full compensation for New Mexico residents and business owners for losses caused by the massive wildfire, but there’s uncertainty about the ultimate price tag.</p> <p>The scar left behind by the wildfire includes some areas that were reduced to ash and others where the severity was less intense. More than 400 firefighters are still assigned to the blaze and have been busy repairing hundreds of miles of fire lines cut to corral the flames, digging trenches to control erosion and removing fallen trees and other debris.</p> <p>The U.S. Forest Service said helicopters will distribute about 138 tons (125 metric tonnes) of seed and 5,440 tons (4,935 metric tonnes) of mulch. So far, about 4 square miles (10 square kilometers) have been seeded.</p>

	<p>No hot spots have been reported for more than a month, but given the history of how the blaze started officials wanted to be confident when declaring containment, said Stefan La-Sky, a fire information officer with the U.S. Forest Service.</p> <p>“We don’t take that number lightly,” he said of the designation.</p> <p>New Mexico marked an early start to what has been a devastating wildfire season across the U.S. with a deadly fire in Ruidoso and then the blaze near Las Vegas.</p> <p>In all, <a href="#">federal fire officials report</a> more than 9,372 square miles (24,273 square kilometers) have burned since the start of the year to outpace the 10-year average, and predictions for more warm, dry weather mean some areas will see above-normal wildfire activity into the fall.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Russia pledges ‘no mercy’ for car bomb</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.usnews.com/news/world-report/articles/2022-08-23/russia-pledges-no-mercy-for-daria-duginas-car-bomb-death">https://www.usnews.com/news/world-report/articles/2022-08-23/russia-pledges-no-mercy-for-daria-duginas-car-bomb-death</a>
GIST	<p>Russia’s top diplomat pledged “no mercy” for the perpetrators of a car bomb attack that killed Daria Dugina, the daughter of a close ultranationalist adviser to Russian President Vladimir Putin.</p> <p>Though Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said the investigation is ongoing into the Saturday evening attack on the outskirts of Moscow that killed the daughter of fascist intellectual Alexander Dugin, other top Russian officials were quick to blame Kyiv, particularly Ukrainian intelligence. American officials have likewise stated that they predicted Moscow would inevitably target Ukraine for retaliation.</p> <p>The startling death of a member of Moscow’s elite appears to have rattled top Russian officials at a time <a href="#">Ukraine has gained some momentum</a> six months after Putin ordered the invasion, including a string of <a href="#">explosions at Russian military facilities in Crimea</a> – territory Moscow previously considered safe havens.</p> <p>“I cannot judge what it was – an act of intimidation or settling scores,” Lavrov told reporters on Tuesday morning about the attack, according to a translation of his remarks. “This was a barbaric crime for which there is no forgiveness.”</p> <p>He noted the FSB Russian security service is conducting the investigation.</p> <p>And though it is ongoing, he added, “Of course, there can be no mercy” for the perpetrators, those who ordered it and those who benefit from it.</p> <p>It is not immediately clear that Dugina herself was the intended target. The 29-year-old journalist, who was leaving an event on the outskirts of Moscow when her car exploded, reportedly shared the same expansionist foreign policy designs that her father – known by some as “Putin’s brain” – has encouraged the Russian leader to pursue.</p> <p>Russia’s Foreign Ministry criticized the U.S. response to the attack, specifically State Department spokesman Ned Price’s assertion at a press conference late Monday.</p> <p>“I have no doubt that the Russians will investigate this. I also have no doubt that the Russians will put forward certain conclusions,” Price said, implying that Moscow would blame Ukraine regardless of the findings. “All I can say from here is that Ukraine has denied any involvement, and for our part, we condemn the intentional targeting of civilians anywhere.”</p> <p>Other Russian officials emphatically framed Ukraine as the perpetrator and emphasized the need for the Kremlin to begin exacting new punishments against it.</p>

Russian legislator Leonid Slutsky, chief of the international affairs committee for Russia's lower house of parliament, the Duma, described Dugina as "the standard for the future of Russia" and framed her killing as "animal hatred," according to a translation. He asserted that she was targeted for her outspoken stance on Russia's foreign policy and because she "denounced what the armed forces of Ukraine are doing on the battlefield."

Slutsky further connected her killing to Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine – which Putin and his cronies have consistently claimed is an act of self-defense to defeat a supposed neo-Nazi regime in Kyiv – by asserting that once Russia conquers the former Soviet state, it should name a street after Dugina in Kyiv.

The attack comes shortly ahead of the six-month mark since Russia on Feb. 24 began its invasion, which Putin insists on calling a "special military operation." Moscow has struggled to endure mounting battlefield casualties along with high-profile strategic and logistical failures among its top commanders.

Ukraine's Defense Ministry estimates more than 45,000 Russian soldiers have died – a number that has not been independently verified – though its military chief also acknowledged on Monday that deaths among Ukrainian troops nears 9,000.

Analysts generally observe that the battle is settling into a burgeoning stalemate but that Russia has also suffered new, unsettling losses in its supposed strongholds. The Kremlin had previously considered Crimea, the strategically critical peninsula it first annexed in 2014, as a relatively safe hub for critical transports of materiel and troops from the Russian mainland over a land bridge and into the conflict zone in Ukraine's south and east.

Over the past several weeks, however, a string of explosions at Russian air and naval bases as well as ammunition depots has attracted global attention. Ukraine has not directly claimed credit for them, though officials speaking on the condition of anonymity have said elite commandos orchestrated the raids.

Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov – among others – has coyly stated that Russian soldiers should be more careful handling lit cigarettes.

Western officials estimated Russia's influential Black Sea Fleet has [lost 50% of its warplane capacity](#) as a result of the attacks.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Russia invasion: 6 lessons-learned</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/23/russias-invasion-ukraine-six-lessons-learned-after/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/23/russias-invasion-ukraine-six-lessons-learned-after/</a>
GIST	<p>Russian President Vladimir Putin's momentous decision to invade Ukraine has taken turns that few predicted, from Moscow's stunning military missteps in the early days of the conflict to the rapid expansion of NATO and the massive disruptions to global food and fuel supplies.</p> <p>As Wednesday marks the grim six-month anniversary of a conflict that has claimed tens of thousands of lives, the fighting is far from over and the war may be about to enter an entirely new phase. Still, foreign policy observers and military analysts say there are already a host of key takeaways from a war that has shattered assumptions and provided a real-world example of what 21st-century ground combat looks like.</p> <p>Here are six key lessons learned in the six months since Russia's Feb. 24 invasion of its neighbor Ukraine.</p> <p><b>1. NATO is more unified and nimble than Putin expected</b></p> <p>Russian President Vladimir Putin and his military leaders seem to have made numerous high-stakes assumptions in their Ukraine battle plan. Arguably the most significant was the expectation that the U.S. and its NATO allies would fracture and find themselves unable to agree on how to punish Russia and</p>

support Ukraine. The combination of European dependence on Russian energy and the West's fear of sparking a nuclear world war, Mr. Putin seems to have believed, would paralyze NATO.

Instead, the U.S., joined by its allies, has steadily ramped up its military aid to Ukraine, including regular shipments of crucial anti-tank weapons. The Associated Press reported Tuesday that the Biden administration will soon announce another \$3 billion for the long-term training of Ukrainian troops. The move suggests Washington is prepared to staunchly support Ukraine even if the fighting in Ukraine's disputed Donbas region drags on indefinitely. Germany announced a major defense spending boost, and even EU states with stronger ties to Moscow have not broken ranks in significant ways.

Over the past six months, the U.S. and Europe also have remained mostly in lockstep in unleashing unprecedented economic sanctions against Moscow. Europe also has rolled out an ambitious plan to wean itself off of Russian oil and gas.

Perhaps most surprising to Mr. Putin, NATO has not fractured but is poised to welcome two long-nonaligned nations, Sweden and Finland, into its ranks, more than doubling the alliance's land border with Russia.

Over time, Western unity could give Ukraine an edge at the negotiating table with Russia, specialists say.

"The Ukrainian armed forces continue to add additional capability, economic sanctions against Russia have had increasing impact, and support for Ukraine by the NATO alliance and other nations has remained remarkably steady. These and other factors could provide a more favorable basis for bringing the war to an end on terms acceptable to Kyiv before winter sets in," said retired Vice Adm. Robert B. Murrett, a career Navy intelligence officer and now a professor at Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs.

## **2. The Russian military was overrated, but the ultimate winner in Ukraine is still undecided**

As the invasion began, the Kremlin appeared confident that its war machine, widely considered one of the world's most effective, would easily crush the Ukrainian military.

That expectation never materialized. A host of major logistical mistakes and poor battlefield decisions doomed Russia's planned lightning blitz on Kyiv and other major cities, forcing Russian commanders to pull back and instead pursue much more limited territorial goals in the eastern Donbas region. For relatively trivial territorial gains, the Russian military has suffered staggering losses over the past six months. Some estimates put Russian casualties at 80,000 or more.

One of the most enduring takeaways of the war, analysts say, is a global reassessment of Russia's military might and whether its army is a true power player that deserves to be mentioned alongside the U.S. and China.

"We made the Russians out to be 10 feet tall. We overestimated the Russians, and we underestimated the Ukrainians," said Jim Townsend, who was deputy assistant secretary of defense for European and NATO policy during the Obama administration.

"We assumed ... that they would roll right into Kyiv," he told The Washington Times. "And they thought so too. But they made some big assumptions that were wrong."

Still, Russia has made incremental gains in the Donbas by capturing key cities such as Mariupol. While Mr. Putin's hope of toppling the government in Kyiv remains on hold, Russia is still intent on chopping off a huge chunk of Ukraine and putting it under firm Russian control — a goal that seems within reach.

## **3. Drones, and the ability to counter them, are central to 21st-century warfare**



One of the biggest factors dooming Russia's attack on Kyiv was Ukraine's effective use of small armed drones. The unmanned craft wreaked havoc on Russian armored columns that seemed woefully unprepared to deal with the newfound threat.

The wild success of Ukraine's drone fleet offered more evidence that swarms of the small, cheap, easy-to-operate aircraft are one of the biggest battlefield difference-makers in the 21st century, evening the odds for a smaller defender to ward off a bigger, better-armed force.

After its initial missteps, the Russian military quickly recalibrated. Military analysts say Russian forces are now employing a complex array of anti-drone programs, including electronic warfare systems that have negated Ukraine's early drone advantage. The success of those EW systems proves that while drones will be crucial weapons of war for years to come, so too will the ability to counter them.

Moving forward, Ukrainian success could hinge on finding ways to blunt Russia's EW systems, which can disable both armed and reconnaissance drones.

"Russian EW employment ... is disrupting, limiting the accuracy of positioning, and slowing down vital kill chains and imposing significant limitations on Ukrainian reconnaissance in depth. Because long-range strike depends on precision systems, which are only available in limited numbers, Russian EW is a critical barrier to Ukrainian forces effectively employing the highly capable Western systems that could enable them to win the firefight and undermine Russia's most important advantage," Jack Watling and Nick Reynolds, analysts with London's Royal United Services Institute, wrote in a recent analysis.

#### **4. The Kremlin's vaunted disinformation machine failed in Ukraine, but has succeeded elsewhere**

Moscow's ability to use disinformation and social media propaganda for political purposes rose to prominence during the 2016 U.S. presidential election and elections across Western Europe. It's been on display in the years since as the Kremlin looked to disrupt domestic politics in the Baltic nations and elsewhere.

Mr. Putin seems to have expected that his disinformation machine could help mobilize pro-Russian sentiment inside Ukraine, particularly in the Donbas, and could undermine Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's government. The Russian president even tried to push the narrative, popular in Russian ultranationalist circles, that his invasion was aimed at rooting out "Nazis" who controlled the Kyiv government and military.

While Russia has effectively controlled the wartime narrative at home, Moscow appears to have decisively lost the battle for global public opinion. Russian messaging, for example, seems to have made relatively little impact on the morale of the Ukrainian military.

Analysts say the Russian campaigns are making a mark elsewhere in the world. Pro-Russia and anti-Ukraine messages have been especially effective in Africa, specialists say. Among other things, Russian social media campaigns have blamed Western sanctions on Russia for global economic turmoil over the past six months.

"Although the direct impact of such campaigns can be hard to ascertain, they do lend extra weight to narratives explaining why almost half of African nations abstained from the United Nations resolution condemning Russia," says a recent analysis by London's Chatham House think tank, referencing a U.N. vote this year in which 17 African countries abstained rather than voting to condemn Russia's invasion.

#### **5. The Kremlin — and the world — badly underestimated Volodymyr Zelenskyy**

The biggest factor behind Russia's disinformation campaign failures in Ukraine, analysts say, is Ukraine's leader, Mr. Zelenskyy. A comedian turned politician previously best known in Washington for being on the other end of the line during an impeachment-sparking phone call with President Trump, Mr. Zelenskyy

faced tough questions about whether he was truly up for the role of wartime leader ready to match the wily, ruthless Mr. Putin.

Many saw the Ukrainian state machinery as weak, its military substandard, and the loyalty of Ukraine's large Russian-speaking minority to the state suspect. It was not clear that Mr. Zelenskyy had wrested control of the government of Kyiv from the powerful oligarchs and factions that had dominated the government and the economy.

He quickly proved his skeptics wrong. Even as Russian troops moved toward Kyiv, Mr. Zelenskyy refused to flee the capital. Employing his impressive media skills, he delivered daily video addresses to the Ukrainian people, publicly cajoled the West into sending more arms and financial aid, and even addressed U.S. lawmakers in a dramatic speech that helped transform him into the global face of his country's fight.

As a near-constant presence on camera, Mr. Zelenskyy became a force in his own right on social media. Across Europe, that helped blunt any Russian disinformation efforts to cast him as corrupt, weak or ineffective.

"Three weeks later, after the war had begun, he's being compared to Winston Churchill," said Mr. Townsend. "With Zelenskyy, I think we're seeing an example of a case where a personality saying the right things at the right moment can triumph over and trump social media."

## **6. Global economies, and fuel and food supplies, are deeply vulnerable to wartime disruptions**

The war's fallout has stretched far beyond Ukraine. From America to Europe and beyond, the conflict sparked immediate spikes in the cost of fuel and helped push inflation to near-record levels. With Russia and Ukraine among the world's biggest agricultural exporters, the Black Sea blockade set up by Moscow held up exports of crucial commodities such as wheat and grain, leading to higher food costs in virtually all corners of the world.

The economic cost will be measured for years to come. Global economic growth in 2022 is expected to be 3%, down from projections of 4.5% before the war, according to recent estimates from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Global economic growth is expected to shrink further to about 2.8% in 2023, the organization said.

Meanwhile, humanitarian groups say the war has sparked sharp increases in food insecurity in Latin America and Africa.

More than 47 million people worldwide now face food insecurity as a direct "ripple effect" of the war in Ukraine, according to recent figures from the United Nations World Food Program. Those 47 million people are in addition to the hundreds of millions facing food insecurity before the war in Ukraine began.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 US sanctions China aerospace companies</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/23/commerce-sanctions-chinese-aerospace-companies-mil/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/23/commerce-sanctions-chinese-aerospace-companies-mil/</a>
GIST	<p>Seven Chinese aerospace companies were added to the Commerce Department blacklist Tuesday for ties to China's large-scale military modernization program.</p> <p>Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security said the seven companies were added to the entity list for "activities contrary to U.S. national security and foreign policy interests."</p> <p>The space and aerospace companies were added to the list after seeking to acquire U.S.-origin products for the Chinese military, the bureau said in a statement made public Tuesday.</p>

Companies placed on the entity list are required to obtain an export license for all U.S. exports, re-exports, or transfers of goods controlled by export rules. The license requirement brings with it a presumption of denial, the statement said.

The action is part of a crackdown on Chinese military-linked companies that began during the administration of former President Trump. The effort is aimed at preventing U.S. technology and products from boosting the Chinese military.

The actions were taken under the 2018 Export Control Reform Act that tightened export controls after the White House that year released a report that said China is acquiring up to \$600 billion in sensitive U.S. technology.

The crackdown also was launched in part to counter China's civil-military fusion program, which seeks to steal foreign civilian technology for use by the Chinese military.

"With this action, the Commerce Department will have approximately 600 Chinese entities on the entity list – more than 110 of which have been added since the start of the Biden Administration," the statement said.

In June, Commerce added 23 Chinese companies to the blacklist, including five that have been linked to arms sales to Russia since the February invasion of Ukraine.

The sanctions affect two units of the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp. (CASC), which U.S. officials say builds Chinese ballistic and hypersonic missiles.

Two institutes of the China Academy of Space Technology, part of CASC, were also sanctioned, along with two institutes of the China Electronics Technology Group Corp.

Another Chinese firm added to the entity list was Zhuhai Orbita Control Systems.

Zhuhai Orbita was identified by Air Force's China Aerospace Studies Institute as practicing military-civil fusion. The company produces micro-satellites, large-scale data collection, and artificial-intelligence technology and products

"U.S. technologies that support space and aerospace activities should not be used to support the PRC's military modernization. We are constantly monitoring these sectors for evidence of diversion," said Alan Estevez, undersecretary of commerce for industry and security.

"China's military-civil fusion program requires BIS to be vigilant and act forcefully when necessary to protect our sensitive technologies," he said.

The latest additions to the entity list were carried out after an internal government review by the Commerce, Defense, State, Energy, and Treasury departments.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/24 Day 182 of the Russia invasion</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/24/russia-ukraine-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-182-of-the-invasion">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/24/russia-ukraine-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-182-of-the-invasion</a>
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ukraine is <a href="#">bracing for possible Russian strikes</a> as it marks its independence day and 31 years since the end of Soviet rule. Authorities have cancelled celebrations in Kyiv as officials warn that Russia is preparing to attack the capital. Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, said he had information from Ukraine's intelligence services and international partners that there was an increased threat, as the US said it believed <a href="#">Russia would target civilian and government infrastructure</a> in the next few days. Ukraine's defence ministry advised Ukrainians to be especially careful, citing the threat of missile attacks and "provocations" from Russia.</li></ul>

- **Many civilians were attempting to leave Kyiv amid fears of a Russian attack**, according to an adviser to Ukraine's president. Alex Rodnyansky said people were worried and that there was "certainly some concern" an attack may strike the centres of decision-making on Wednesday. Russia and the Putin regime "are really obsessed with dates and symbols, so it would be logical to be on the lookout and be prepared for independence day to be attacked", said Andriy Yusov, the head of the ministry's intelligence directorate.
- **Zelenskiy has [warned Russia of a strong response](#) to any independence day attacks**. Russia "will receive a response, a powerful response".
- Zelenskiy said Ukraine will not agree to any proposal to freeze the current frontlines in order to "calm" Moscow, which controls about 22% of Ukraine including Crimea. "At the point where we are, we are not ready for a ceasefire. We explained that there will be no Minsk-3, Minsk-5, or Minsk-7. We will not play these games, we have lost part of our territories this way ... it is a trap," he said during a press conference after a summit of the Crimea Platform in Kyiv.
- **Zelenskiy also vowed to return Crimea to Ukraine**, saying it would become part of the EU along with the rest of the country. "We will return Crimea, because it is our territory. In any way we decide. We will decide it on our own, without consulting any other state. It all began with Crimea, and it will end with Crimea."
- **The UN nuclear watchdog said it would visit the Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant** in Ukraine "within the next few days if ongoing negotiations succeed".
- **The US is set to announce a fresh security assistance package for Ukraine of about \$3bn (£2.5bn)**, officials have said, to equip it for a war of attrition and secure its medium- to long-term defence posture. The money will fund contracts for as many as three types of drones, and other weapons, ammunition and equipment that may not see the battlefield for a year or two, US officials told the Associated Press.
- **Ukraine has accused Russia of having [organised illegal mass adoptions of Ukrainian children](#)** after transferring them from occupied territories to the Russia mainland. "More than 1,000 children from Mariupol [a southern Ukrainian city occupied by Russian troops] were illegally transferred to outsiders in Tyumen, Irkutsk, Kemerovo and Altai Krai" in Siberia, Ukraine's foreign ministry said.
- **The UN has said it is "very concerned" about plans by Russian-backed authorities to hold trials for captured Ukrainian soldiers in Mariupol**. Pro-Russian officials appeared to be installing metal cages in a hall in Mariupol as part of plans to establish what they were calling an "international tribunal", a UN rights office spokesperson said, adding that such a process could itself amount to a war crime.
- **A \$75m (£63) superyacht linked to a Russian steel billionaire has been put to auction** in Gibraltar in the [first sale of an oligarch's assets](#) since Putin invaded Ukraine in February. The 72.5-metre Axioma was [seized from Dmitry Pumpyansky in March](#) under [sanctions by the UK, EU and the US](#).
- **Hundreds of people gathered in Moscow for the [funeral of Darya Dugina](#)**. Dugina, daughter of ultra-nationalist Alexander Dugin, was killed on Saturday in a car bomb attack outside Moscow. Russia's FSB security service has accused Ukrainian intelligence agencies of ordering her killing, which Kyiv denies.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/24 Ukraine fought, saved Kyiv from Russia</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2022/08/24/kyiv-battle-ukraine-defense/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2022/08/24/kyiv-battle-ukraine-defense/</a>
GIST	<p><a href="#">A months-long examination by The Washington Post of the Ukrainian military's successful defense of Kyiv</a> is based on extensive interviews with more than 100 people, including many of the country's top political and military leaders.</p> <p>Here are some key findings:</p> <p><b>1. In the run-up to the war, Ukrainian political officials downplayed the likelihood of a full-scale Russian invasion, but the Ukrainian military was making critical preparations.</b></p>

The Ukrainian military began preparing weeks in advance, moving equipment and personnel off bases and into the field — a critical move that allowed the force to survive an initial barrage of Russian airstrikes.

Still, some senior leaders in the Ukrainian military, including the commander in charge of the defense of Kyiv, doubted that Russia would launch an all-out invasion, including an assault on the capital, and thought hostilities would probably be confined to Ukraine's east.

## **2. Russia directly and through an intermediary tried to get the Ukrainian government to capitulate in the initial hours of the war.**

Shortly after the start of the invasion, the Kremlin's deputy chief of staff, Dmitry Kozak, called the head of Zelensky's administration, Andriy Yermak, and demanded Ukrainian capitulation, according to Yermak. Yermak swore at him and hung up the phone.

The defense minister of Belarus called his Ukrainian counterpart, Oleksii Reznikov, and presented himself as an emissary of Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu. The Belarusian official offered to negotiate a capitulation to Russia, Reznikov said. Reznikov told him the only capitulation he would negotiate would be Moscow's.

## **3. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky wasn't opposed to resigning or leaving Kyiv if it would end the war.**

In the initial hours of the war, as Western officials urged him to evacuate, Zelensky told them he would happily leave or resign if it would end the war. He said he wasn't concerned about losing his position but simply believed his departure would only help the Russians achieve their goal and worsen the situation for Ukrainians.

"I'm not trying to hold on to power," Zelensky said he explained to the Western officials. "If the question is that I leave, and that will stop the bloodshed, then I am all for it. I will go right now. I didn't get into politics for that — and I will go whenever you say, if it will stop the war."

While he believed some Western officials were truly concerned about his personal safety, Zelensky also suspected that some of his foreign interlocutors simply wanted the conflict to end as quickly as possible, with his administration effectively surrendering to Russia.

## **4. Yermak, the head of Ukraine's presidential administration, used gruesome photographs of the war to persuade partners.**

Yermak said he sent graphic photos of slain civilians and ruined buildings to the personal cellphones of top officials around the world, including Jake Sullivan, the White House national security adviser, and Karen Donfried, the assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs.

"I confess these were ghastly photos that were keeping me up at night," Yermak said. "Ninety percent of the people who received them, they reacted, they called back and they started doing even more."

## **5. For a few days in the middle of March, Ukrainian forces defending Kyiv almost completely ran out of artillery ammunition.**

As they repelled the initial Russian assault on Kyiv, Ukrainian forces began to run low on Soviet-era artillery shells, reaching a crisis moment in mid-March.

Because Washington had assumed Russia would take over Ukraine quickly, U.S. officials had prepared a pipeline of portable weapons such as Stingers and Javelins that could be used by an underground resistance and hadn't focused on large artillery equipment and ammunition. That caused a scramble after the Ukrainian defense exceeded Washington's expectations, a senior U.S. defense official said.

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SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/interactive/2022/kyiv-battle-ukraine-survival/?itid=hp-top-table-main-t-2">https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/interactive/2022/kyiv-battle-ukraine-survival/?itid=hp-top-table-main-t-2</a>
GIST	<p>KYIV, Ukraine — A hail of shrapnel from kamikaze drones ripped through the tent where off-duty Ukrainian border guards were sleeping near a crossing with Belarus, three hours north of Ukraine’s capital.</p> <p>Viktor Derevyanko woke to scalding pain, his body burning. Blood spilled from his hand as he tried to wipe his face. A piece of metal had traveled through his arm and stomach and into the muscle around his heart.</p> <p>“I couldn’t get my bearings,” said Derevyanko, the deputy head of the unit. “Only on the third explosion did I manage to fall out of bed and try to find at least someplace to hide, because the explosions weren’t ending.”</p> <p>It was around 4:15 a.m. on Feb. 24.</p> <p>Hours earlier, Derevyanko and the other Ukrainian guards had been joking dismissively about President Biden yet again warning of a Russian invasion. Now they were its first target.</p> <p>Within minutes, Russian missiles began soaring out of their launchers. They pounded Ukrainian air defenses, radar batteries, ammunition depots, airfields and bases, filling the early morning with the sounds of war.</p> <p>At almost the same time, Ukrainian Interior Minister Denis Monastyrsky woke to the ringing of his cellphone. In recent days, he had experienced a rush of relief every time he opened his eyes to the morning light, realizing that the arrival of a new day meant Russia hadn’t invaded. This time, it was still dark. Ukraine’s border guard chief was on the line and told him that his units were battling Russians across three of the country’s northeastern regions.</p> <p>This wasn’t the limited invasion, isolated to the country’s east, that many top Ukrainian officials had been expecting.</p> <p>Monastyrsky hung up and dialed <a href="#">President Volodymyr Zelensky</a>.</p> <p>“It has started,” Monastyrsky told the Ukrainian leader.</p> <p>“What exactly?” Zelensky asked.</p> <p>“Judging by the fact that there are attacks underway at different places all at once, this is it,” he said, telling Zelensky that it looked like a full-scale invasion bearing down on Kyiv.</p> <p>“In the first minutes, they delivered terrible blows to our air defense, terrible blows to our troops in general. ... There were 20-meter craters, the likes of which no one has seen in their lifetimes,” Monastyrsky later recalled.</p> <p>The question everyone faced at that moment, Monastyrsky said, was: “How far can the enemy go with that enormous fist?”</p> <p>If the Russians could seize the seat of power in Ukraine, or at least cause the government to flee in panic, the defense of the country would quickly unravel. Moscow could install a puppet government.</p> <p>That was the Kremlin’s plan.</p> <p>Instead, what transpired in and around Kyiv in the ensuing 36 days would represent <a href="#">the biggest foreign blunder in the 22-year rule of Russian President Vladimir Putin</a>. His assault on the city instantly reordered the security architecture of Europe against Moscow and isolated his nation to a degree unseen since the</p>



Cold War. To the surprise of the world, the offensive against the Ukrainian capital would end in a humiliating retreat, which would expose deep systemic problems in a Russian military [he had spent billions to rebuild](#).

Despite the flaws that would emerge in Russia's war planning, the outcome of the battle for Kyiv was far from predetermined. This account of how Ukrainian forces defended, and saved, their capital is based on interviews with more than 100 people — from Zelensky and his advisers, to Ukrainian military commanders, to volunteer militiamen, as well as senior U.S. and European political and military officials.

A reconstruction of events shows that even as Ukraine's political leadership had downplayed the likelihood of a full-scale invasion, the Ukrainian military had taken critical steps to withstand Russia's initial assault. Commanders had moved personnel and equipment off bases, despite in many cases their own doubts about what was to come.

Ukrainian forces lacked sufficient weaponry, ammunition and communications equipment. But what they did possess was a profound will to fight — one that would extend beyond Ukrainian soldiers to ordinary civilians and, most important, to the president himself.

The defenders would also take advantage of terrain around the capital — dense forests, narrow roads, winding rivers — that favored their guerrilla tactics, as well as weather short of freezing that thawed the land and bogged down Russian vehicles. In particular, the Irpin River, a waterway that marked the line of defense on Kyiv's western edge, would help protect the capital when Ukrainian forces released dammed water to flood its banks.

Those fighting to save Kyiv also benefited greatly from key miscalculations by the Kremlin, which set in motion a plan to invade Kyiv based on poor assumptions about the mettle of the Ukrainian military, the durability of the Zelensky government and the determination of the Ukrainian people to resist. In the end, the Russians wouldn't take any territory inside Kyiv's city limits, instead remaining stuck for weeks on the capital's periphery before their retreat.

The Kremlin did not respond to requests for comment.

As the war began, Putin was some 475 miles away in Moscow. Seated at a wooden desk in a black suit and maroon tie, he appeared on television to announce what he called a "special operation" to "demilitarize and denazify" Ukraine. Moscow had been left with "no other opportunity to protect Russia other than the one we will be forced to use today," Putin said.

As the speech finished, booms resounded across Kyiv. [Ukraine's first lady, Olena Zelenska](#), said she turned over in bed to find an empty space where her husband had been sleeping. She got up and walked over to find him putting on a charcoal gray suit and white shirt. No tie.

"What is happening?" she [asked](#).

"It has started," Zelensky replied. He looked at the faces of his children, ages 17 and 9 before leaving for his office. Zelensky said he couldn't help thinking that Russian missiles were flying "over my children, over all of our children" — that an unthinkable number of Ukrainians were about to die.

The choice Moscow had made, after months of pretend diplomacy, victim-playing and lies on the international stage was beneath all dignity, Zelensky thought. He felt certain that Ukrainians shared his fury, that they would fight.

Zelensky convened a meeting of his top advisers. They decided that part of the cabinet — including those responsible for police and defense — would stay in Kyiv, as others relocated to western Ukraine. Officials watched wide-eyed as border surveillance cameras captured hundreds of Russian tanks and other armored vehicles flowing into Ukraine in columns reminiscent of a World War II advance. From Belarus in the north. From Russia in the east. From Crimea in the south.

“The whole map was red and required attention,” Monastyrsky said.

The Russians pressed into the hazardous zone around the defunct Chernobyl nuclear plant, where the head of the Ukrainian border guard sector, Vitaliy Yavorskiy, would later find evidence that they had dug trenches in radioactive soil and eaten contaminated deer they shot in the nearby woods.

The goal of the invaders was to penetrate and seize Kyiv, the centuries-old metropolis topped with golden domes above the Dnieper River. Declared the “Mother of Rus Cities” by Oleg of Novgorod when he seized it in the Middle Ages, the city shares a past with Russia that [Putin had seized upon to undermine Ukrainian sovereignty](#). Putin had characterized Russians and Ukrainians as one people separated by Soviet contrivance and Western interference, building a case for going to war to reset history.

As morning broke over Kyiv, Zelensky began to work the phones, speaking with President Biden, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and other leaders to ask for help. Within hours, he sat down at a desk and self-recorded a video to the Ukrainian people — millions of whom had considered an assault on Kyiv an impossibility and were now waking up to explosions and piling into their cars in shock.

“Today I ask you, each one of you, to remain calm. If it is possible, please stay home,” Zelensky said. “We are working. The army is working. The entire security and defense sector of Ukraine is working.” He promised to appear later in the day and stay in regular contact, assuring Ukrainians that they would remain strong. “We are ready for anything. We will defeat anyone,” he said. “Glory to Ukraine!”

Inside the government complex in central Kyiv, the head of Zelensky’s administration, Andriy Yermak, looked down at his ringing cellphone. It was the Kremlin.

The former entertainment lawyer, a permanent fixture at Zelensky’s side, at first couldn’t bring himself to pick up, he said. The phone rang once, then again. He answered. He heard the gravelly voice of Dmitry Kozak, the Kremlin deputy chief of staff, who was born in Ukraine but had long ago entered Putin’s inner circle. Kozak said it was time for the Ukrainians to surrender.

Yermak swore at Kozak and hung up.

## II

Bookish and pensive, Gen. Col. Oleksandr Syrsky is the kind of seasoned military officer who plans for all contingencies — even the scenarios he deems highly unlikely.

The notion that Kyiv — where urban warfare would vex even the most sophisticated military — could be Putin’s primary initial target defied belief for most of the Ukrainian elite, even within the armed forces.

“To think the leadership of Russia would unleash such brazen, large-scale aggression, honestly speaking, I could not even imagine it,” recalled Syrsky, who had fought Russia and its separatist proxies in eastern Ukraine and was tapped to lead Kyiv’s defense just before the invasion. “It seemed to me that if active hostilities were to start, they would most likely start in the east, around or within the borders of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

“But we’re the military,” said Syrsky, one of several top Ukrainian military and political officials who spoke at length about the battle for Kyiv, some of them, like Syrsky, in their first extensive interviews. “Therefore, regardless of what I believed or didn’t believe, how it all seemed, I still carried out the activities required.”

Given [the array of Putin’s forces along Ukraine’s borders](#), Syrsky had determined that if the Russians did attack Kyiv, their columns would advance along two or three major highways on what they foresaw as a fast, decapitating drive to the government quarter in Kyiv. The Kremlin battle plan assumed the city would be left defended by only weak Ukrainian forces, disoriented by the political chaos as Zelensky and his ministers fled.

To protect the city, Syrsky had organized two rings of forces, one in the outer suburbs and one within the capital. He wanted the outer ring to be as far from the inner ring as possible to protect the downtown area from shelling and keep the Russians fighting on the approaches to Kyiv.

Syrsky divided the city and the surrounding region into sectors and assigned generals from the military education centers to lead each area, creating a clear chain of command to which all Ukrainian military units and security services would answer. Tactical decisions would be made immediately by officers on the ground without having to consult headquarters.

About a week before the invasion, the Ukrainian military had moved all command posts into the field toward the probable axes of a Russian advance. Syrsky had also issued an order to move the army's aviation assets, including helicopters and jets, off major bases, putting them well away from obvious airstrike targets.

When it came to tank power, however, only one mechanized brigade, the 72nd, was available to defend the capital — clearly insufficient for such a large city. As a fix, Syrsky said, he ordered all the military education centers to create special makeshift battalions and had the artillery systems normally used for training brought to the capital area.

Some of those systems came from the Divychki training center southeast of Kyiv, where Ukraine years earlier had brought back into service heavy Soviet-era tanks known as 2S7 Pions, or Peonies. Juggernauts of artillery warfare, each weighing 46 tons and carrying 203mm howitzers, they can fire shells of over 240 pounds more than 20 miles.

Syrsky ordered his artillerymen to take up defensive positions outside the city, to the northeast and northwest, the areas likely to face a Russian onslaught.

That single move turned out to be critical, according to [Kyiv's mayor, former boxing champion Vitali Klitschko](#), because Russia targeted the bases where those systems were normally housed in the very first hours of the war.

The Ukrainians largely kept their preparations to themselves. A senior U.S. defense official said Washington knew more about Russia's plan to invade than about Ukraine's plan for defense, fueling doubts about how Kyiv would fare. U.S. officials suspected that the Ukrainian military was wary of sharing war plans while its political leadership was downplaying the likelihood of war, the official said, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss a sensitive matter.

Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov said he was one of the leaders who didn't believe an all-out assault was coming.

European officials had been assuring him they didn't see the same threat the United States and Britain did. According to Ukraine's own intelligence assessments, Russia also didn't have enough forces amassed over the border to capture or occupy a city the size of Kyiv.

On Feb. 22, Reznikov had spoken over the phone with his counterpart in Belarus, Viktor Khrenin, who promised that Russian forces on Belarusian territory would not invade — offering his word as an officer, the Ukrainian defense minister said.

“And he was a liar,” Reznikov said.

Two days later, after the invasion had begun, the two men spoke again. Reznikov heard a nervous and uncomfortable voice on the other end of the line. The Belarusian minister said he was conveying a message from his Russian counterpart, Sergei Shoigu, Reznikov recalled: If Ukraine would sign an act of capitulation, the invasion would stop.

Reznikov said he replied, “I am ready to accept the capitulation from the Russian side.”

### III

The Russian helicopters swept low over the Dnieper, their rotor blades slicing the moist winter air in the fold of the river valley. They flew south [out of Belarus](#) to a place where the river widens into a placid expanse that locals call a sea, then banked to the suburb of Hostomel, 22 miles northwest of Ukraine’s government quarter.

The Ka-52 Alligator attack helicopters in the group took the lead, opening fire on their target below — [Antonov Airport](#), a cargo and testing facility with a major runway. Putin’s chosen bridgehead for his assault on Kyiv was the very airport CIA Director William J. Burns, during a Jan. 12 visit to Kyiv, had warned the Ukrainians that Russia would try to seize.

Vitaly Rudenko, a commander at the national guard base just outside the airport gates, looked up in disbelief. “Until the final moment, I didn’t believe it. Maybe I didn’t want to believe it,” he said.

In Kyiv, Ukraine’s military leadership had descended into a fortified shelter. Defense communications aides hurried down the hallway in pursuit of Lt. Gen. Yevhen Moisiuk, the No. 2 officer in Ukraine’s armed forces, to ask him what message they should deliver to Ukrainians as Russian forces entered their towns.

Moisiuk stopped walking and spun around.

“Tell everyone: ‘Kill the occupiers,’ ” Moisiuk said. “Kill the occupiers!”

There were early setbacks at Hostomel. Some of the air defenses the Ukrainians had set up around the airport were hit by strikes before Russia sent in its troop carriers. An employee of the airfield whose son had been recruited by Russian intelligence had revealed their positions, Syrsky said.

The most combat-ready personnel on the base had deployed weeks earlier to Ukraine’s eastern Luhansk region, along with their equipment, leaving the airport and base with about 300 soldiers, including draftees who were serving out Ukraine’s mandatory military service. Many had never seen combat.

The helicopters were circling like a kettle of vultures over the airport, whirring against an overcast sky already black with smoke from missile strikes.

“They opened fire at anything within reach, all the buildings, at any people they saw moving around, regardless of whether they were military or civilians — they didn’t care. They were just firing wherever they detected movement,” said a national guard platoon commander whose radio call sign is Malysh, or Kid. Like others, he withheld his name for security reasons.

As the first helicopters reached the airstrip, Serhiy Falatyuk, a 25-year-old national guardsman, propped an Igla surface-to-air system dating to the Soviet Union on his shoulder, peered through the sight and fired a missile.

It missed.

Falatyuk reloaded, turned his sights on another Russian helicopter and fired again, according to Rudenko. The missile struck the helicopter. Falatyuk screamed in delight.

The small victory electrified the Ukrainian forces, boosting the spirits of Malysh’s draftees. “It was actually possible to shoot [them] down, to do it,” everyone thought, according to Malysh. “The fighters’ morale increased. They grew more persistent. ... Regardless of whether they were conscripts, they were fighters.”

Several Ukrainian air defenses had been moved the day before the invasion, so they remained undisclosed to the Russians and spearheaded a counterattack within minutes, Syrsky said. The Russian pilots struggled under the heavy fire of surface-to-air missiles and antiaircraft artillery, particularly after a direct hit downed one of their leaders.

“They were shooting from all sides. In the first attack, we immediately lost the leader of our group,” Capt. Ivan Boldyrev, one of the Ka-52 pilots, [told](#) the Russian state-run defense TV channel Zvezda. Boldyrev had to make an emergency landing after his helicopter suffered damage.

Dozens of civilian employees across the airport ran for the bomb shelter under the cafeteria. Others hid wherever they could, including in the sewers.

“People ... looked at one another, understood what was happening, but didn’t understand why,” said Vyacheslav Denysenko, one of the Antonov employees.

Outside, Russian forces streamed out of transport helicopters and fanned out to an adjoining small forest and a complex of buildings at the airport.

The Ukrainian soldiers came under constant fire. Outgunned and outnumbered on the grounds of the airport, and facing elite Russian units with far more experience, national guard fighters began to run low on ammunition. “I gave the command ... to retreat,” Rudenko said.

The exit was chaotic. Rudenko ordered the air defense units and scouts to leave by hopping the fence. Guardsmen close enough to vehicles jumped in and sped away. Others ran on foot. Some of the guardsmen were taken prisoner by the Russians.

After the retreat, however, Ukrainian forces opened fire on the airport with heavy artillery they had deployed outside the airport perimeter, blasting the runway to prevent future landings. In addition, late on Feb. 24, two Ukrainian Su-24 bombers swept over the airport and bombed the runway, causing more damage.

Still, the Russians had their bridgehead.

The Ukrainian equivalent of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Valery Zaluzhny, called Col. Oleksandr Vdovychenko, commander of the 72nd Mechanized Brigade, the only such unit in the Kyiv region and the main force defending the capital.

“We have to retake Hostomel,” Zaluzhny said.

“Mr. Commander in Chief, with all due respect, I don’t have enough forces to take Hostomel,” Vdovychenko recalled responding.

“We should try,” Zaluzhny replied.

Along with elite Ukrainian units, the 72nd Brigade’s troops contested the airport for days, firing artillery barrages and blocking Russian forces struggling to move out of the facility. Moscow had been planning to bring in heavy equipment and more troops on Il-76 cargo aircraft to aid the advance, according to Ukrainian officials, but couldn’t immediately do so.

“That they were able to storm the airfield and take control of it in the course of a few hours, on the one hand, played a negative role [for us],” Syrsky said. “But on the other hand, the artillery fire aimed at the runway and disembarkation sites delayed the landing significantly and frustrated the plan to capture Kyiv, because we know now that in principle the enemy allocated a maximum of up to three days for the capture of Kyiv.”

Later, however, the Russians were able to bring in reinforcements to Hostomel via aircraft, Vdovychenko said.

Over subsequent days, Russian forces already on the ground spread out — into the neighboring suburbs [of Bucha](#) and Irpin and the town of Hostomel itself — as they sought to find a route into Kyiv. But a week after the landing, they were still fighting on the streets of Hostomel. A 40-mile-long resupply convoy heading to Hostomel from Belarus ground to a halt north of Kyiv, exposing Russia's logistical problems.

One 31-year-old Hostomel resident, Masha Maas, had been taking cover in the bunker of a glass factory in the center of the town when she saw three Russian soldiers arriving on March 6, after Ukrainian forces had retreated.

"I said, what should we do?" she recalled. "If we close the doors from the inside, they could think someone is left in here and break it or flood it — who knows? If we leave them open, they can shoot us. Take your pick. We decided not to close the doors."

The first Russian soldier who walked in had blond hair and dark eyes with giant pupils, she recalled. "Why are you looking at me like I'm a fascist?" Maas recalled him saying. "I'm not a fascist. It's your Ukrainian soldiers who are fascists."

By March 7, the Russians had occupied the bulk of Hostomel and were using the airport as a hub.

Zaluzhny, the Ukrainian military's top officer, again spoke to the commander of the 72nd Brigade and ordered him to hold an agreed-upon line on Hostomel's outskirts and prevent the Russians from advancing any closer to the capital.

"Not one step back," he said.

The Ukrainians for days blocked the Russian troops from proceeding down the highway toward Kyiv. Frustrated, the Russians tried to find another way into the city. Their best hope: breaking through a forest in the village of Moshchun at the edge of the capital.

#### IV

Several hours into the invasion, deep beneath Kyiv's government quarter, Zelensky was breathing the stale air of a bunker that had been built in the Soviet era and hardly touched since.

The head of the National Security and Defense Council, Oleksiy Danilov, had laid out the situation for the president. "The simple issue is that all of our partners are telling us it will be very hard for us, that we have almost zero chances to succeed," Danilov told him.

"We will not receive much support in the first days, because they will look at how we are able to defend the country," he continued. "Maybe they don't want [a large amount of weapons](#) to get in the hands of the Russians."

Danilov also issued Zelensky a personal warning. There was credible information that the Russians had set in motion a plan to kill or capture him. At a minimum, Zelensky must ensure that anyone around him with a weapon was a known, loyal person. Whether he should evacuate, Danilov added, was up to him.

To make that decision, "you have to look deep inside," Danilov told the president, without making a recommendation one way or the other. "The stakes are too high."

Others were urging Zelensky to leave. His presidential guard advised him to relocate to a secure location outside the capital and possibly later to western Ukraine, according to Oleksiy Arestovych, a military adviser to the Ukrainian leader.



“Your office is a target,” the presidential guard warned, according to Arestovych, who added his own recommendation that Zelensky should leave Kyiv. “There are going to be rockets hitting it and saboteurs will attack.”

Even the bunker wasn’t safe. “There was talk of them barricading the exits and releasing gas,” said Arestovych.

Dark warnings had been [emanating from Moscow](#) for years, but this possibility seemed especially twisted. Russian units were approaching Kyiv to “liberate” Ukraine from alleged “Nazis” by threatening the life of its first Jewish president — possibly, his advisers feared, with deadly gas.

The Kremlin had reason to expect Zelensky might leave. Eight years earlier, Viktor Yanukovych, the Ukrainian president backed by Moscow, had escaped to Russia after a pro-Europe uprising in Kyiv. The U.S.-supported president of Afghanistan, Ashraf Ghani, had fled the country in 2021 as the Taliban surrounded Kabul. Russian leaders saw Zelensky, [a 44-year-old former comedic actor](#), as a lightweight who would crumble in the face of tanks.

As the day went on, Arestovych became convinced the Ukrainian military would not be able to defend the capital and told the president as much. “People who understood military things went up to him and said, ‘We’re not going to hold,’ ” Arestovych said.

Zelensky eventually erupted. He was staying.

“This is the last time I am going to hear this,” Arestovych recalled him saying. “I don’t want to hear it again.”

Zelensky told Danilov to stop annoying him with constant warnings about threats to his life, asking the National Security and Defense Council chief whether he had anything else to say — anything more important.

“Listen, I am a living person. I don’t want to die, like any other person,” Zelensky said. “But I definitely know that if I think about that, then I’m already dead.”

In the first hours and days, he lived with a constant sense of acute tension, his palms sweating like they would when he was a kid taking exams, he said. Reznikov, the defense minister, would eventually need to see a therapist, he said, because he was so emotionally and physically exhausted.

Zelensky also received appeals about the need to maintain continuity of government from U.S. and European officials, in some cases with offers to help him leave the capital. By ensuring his own security, the officials reasoned, he could prevent a power vacuum.

He saw the situation in exactly opposite terms — if he fled, he would be ceding Ukraine’s power center to the Russians without a fight, and it would result in the immediate collapse of the government. How would members of the Ukrainian military feel on the front lines if the president was gone? Zelensky said this wasn’t about him clinging to the presidency.

“I’m not trying to hold on to power,” Zelensky said he explained to the Western officials. “If the question is that I leave, and that will stop the bloodshed, then I am all for it. I will go right now. I didn’t get into politics for that — and I will go whenever you say, if it will stop the war.”

Zelensky suspected that some of his foreign interlocutors simply wanted the conflict to end as quickly as possible, with his administration effectively surrendering to Russia.

“Of all those who called me, there was no one who believed we would survive. Not because they didn’t believe in Ukraine, but because of this demonization of the leader of the Russian Federation — his power, his philosophy, the way he advertised the might of the Russian army. And so [they thought], with all due

respect to the Ukrainians: They won't bring it, they'll be finished off in two or three days, maybe five, and then it will all end."

From the first hours, his chief focus became marshaling the support Ukraine would need to survive — from Ukrainians, who needed to resist, but also from foreign leaders, who needed to send Kyiv weapons and raise the costs for Russia.

In one video call with European leaders, he said, "This may be the last time you see me alive." Ukrainian mothers are watching their children die in pursuit of European values, he told them. It left some of the European officials in tears.

Zelensky's outreach proved to be equal parts inspiration and shaming. As much as he spoke to a given country's leaders, he also appealed to its people, sometimes by serving up blunt truths to their governments in public. He urged German Chancellor Olaf Scholz to "tear down this wall" — a reference to President Ronald Reagan's call to remove the Berlin Wall — arguing that Russia once again was trying to divide Europe. He told German politicians they must do what they could, "so that you will not be ashamed of yourselves after this war."

Yermak, the head of the presidential administration, said that over the subsequent weeks, he regularly texted photos of slain Ukrainian children and ruined Ukrainian homes to the cellphones of officials around the world, including Jake Sullivan, the White House national security adviser; Karen Donfried, the assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs; and members of Congress.

"I confess these were ghastly photos that were keeping me up at night," Yermak said. "Ninety percent of the people who received them, they reacted, they called back and they started doing even more."

Ukrainians of all ages who had never held a gun rushed to take up arms after officials decided within days of the invasion to hand out weapons and arm a potential guerrilla resistance. Ukrainian military leaders bristled at the decision, and later said it caused friendly-fire incidents and interference with their force's operations.

Monastyrsky, the interior minister, called it an "important deterrent," to Russians but also to potential Ukrainian turncoats. Any Ukrainian mayor thinking of betraying the nation would understand that 20 people with guns were waiting outside, Monastyrsky said, and that "he and his family would be first."

The visible determination of ordinary citizens underscored that Ukraine couldn't be forcibly removed from Europe the way the Kremlin wanted, Zelensky said.

"For the Russian Federation, we were like an appendix that needed to be removed, but they didn't understand. They thought we were an appendix, but we turned out to be the heart of Europe," Zelensky said. "And we made this heart beat."

On the night of Feb. 25, as gunshots were heard in downtown Kyiv and rumors that [Chechen fighters](#) were coming to kill him circulated, Zelensky emerged from his bunker and went out on the street in front of the presidential office to show on camera that he wasn't going anywhere.

Standing behind him in the muted light of the streetlamps were his prime minister, the head of his political party, his chief of staff and another top adviser. The prime minister held up his phone to show the date and time.

"We are all here," Zelensky said. "Our troops are here. Civil society is here. And we are here. We are defending the independence of our country. We will continue to do so."

Ringed by a pine forest, a river and a lake, and with a prewar population of just 1,500, the village of Moshchun was a picture of exurban life — a mixture of affluent professionals with weekend retreats and longtime locals in modest cottages.

But when Capt. Roman Kovalenko, a company commander in the 72nd Mechanized Brigade, entered the village with a small group of fighters on Feb. 27, homes were on fire, villagers were running to escape and an aircraft was falling from the sky.

Within minutes, a platoon commander in one of the vehicles ahead of Kovalenko was shot in the face and killed. Russian scouts had just entered Moshchun. Days into the war, the village had few defenders except for a handful of Ukrainian militiamen, even though it was a strategic prize: Just beyond Moshchun lay the capital.

The dense forests dotted with pillboxes from World War II and the waterway gave the Ukrainians a natural landscape to exploit. The Irpin River separated Hostomel from Moshchun, and the Russians struggled to move men and materiel across it in the face of hit-and-run attacks from small Ukrainian units and punishing artillery strikes on their pontoon bridges.

At the center of the fighting was Kovalenko, who just weeks earlier had followed in the footsteps of his identical twin, Dmytro, and become a company commander in the 72nd Brigade. For years, the 36-year-old twins had fought [in the country's eastern Donbas region](#). Now they had ended up on opposite edges of Kyiv — Roman in the northwest, Dmytro in the northeast.

The shelling and fighting along the Irpin continued for days. On the morning of March 6, Russians troops finally began to force their way across the river in numbers. Kovalenko and his soldiers counterattacked, launching grenades and firing from infantry fighting vehicles in close combat.

“Keep firing, nonstop!” Kovalenko ordered.

But with his soldiers running low on ammunition, he ordered them to retreat to the village center, with Russian soldiers close on their heels. There, Kovalenko and his men regrouped with arriving Ukrainian special forces and other troops — some of them armed with [U.S.-supplied Javelin antitank missiles](#) — and foreign volunteers.

Russian Grad rockets, artillery fire, mortar rounds, airstrikes, drone-directed attacks and helicopter strafing bore down on their trenches. Russian jamming cut off communications and made Ukrainian drones inoperable. Kovalenko lost contact with the rest of his company, left stationed in a village six miles to the north.

The Ukrainians kept fighting, Kovalenko said, preventing the Russians from steamrolling through the area. “You get so exhausted that by night you are just passing out,” Kovalenko said. “You don’t care about the shelling anymore, whatever is flying, you just need to sleep for an hour or two. You don’t care if it’s freezing, snowing, raining, if there’s mud around you. You just lie down.

“Many couldn’t cope mentally,” Kovalenko continued. “It’s hard not to break down. Sometimes I would break down myself.”

Kovalenko tried to reach the artillery units to ask them to open fire and stop the constant Russian barrages for at least a few minutes.

At the time, the fighting all along the Kyiv front had grown so intense that for a few days Ukrainian forces around the capital risked running out of 152mm artillery ammunition, according to top Ukrainian officials. The United States had armed Ukraine with portable weapons such as Stingers and Javelins that could be used by an underground resistance, assuming that the Russians would overcome the Ukrainians quickly, according to a senior U.S. defense official. Equipment and ammunition for artillery were limited, forcing the United States and its allies to scramble to restock Kyiv.

On March 11, the Russians stormed Moshchun from all sides.

“On that day, I felt like I got hit with a hammer on my head at least eight times, because everything was falling right next to us,” Kovalenko said. “A great number of our troops got concussions. Many got hit by debris. Everything they had — aviation, artillery, Grads — it was all firing at our trenches to get us out of there.”

The Ukrainians brought tanks and more experienced fighters into the village to rebuff the onslaught. Kovalenko was sent to the hospital for head trauma from the blasts as his men rotated out. Tears fell down his face as he called his brother on the road to Kyiv.

“We held them back,” he said. He couldn’t believe he was alive.

By then, the Russians were facing fierce resistance from Ukrainian forces and Territorial Defense militia units in the nearby city of Irpin and other areas west of the capital. Unable to break Ukraine’s defenses there, the Russians decided to concentrate on pushing into Kyiv through Moshchun.

Looking at drone and thermal-imaging footage, Syrsky, the general in charge of the capital’s defense, had seen rows of Russian equipment on the other side of the Irpin River, all lined up in battle formation. Moshchun was about to break.

“This was probably the most critical moment, when I thought, ‘Well, is this really going to be it?’ ” Syrsky recalled. “Because [taking] Moshchun means entry into Kyiv.”

Part of the solution rested in an oddity of the Irpin, which flows to a dam 15 miles north of Moshchun and is then lifted up by pumps into a reservoir on the Dnieper River. The Soviets had constructed an elaborate system of sluices along the Irpin’s 101-mile course to make the contiguous land arable.

Early in the war, the Ukrainians blew up part of the dam with artillery to force a deluge from the reservoir down into the Irpin, running counter to its current, as a barrier against the Russians. Special forces units with Ukraine’s military intelligence service sneaked behind enemy lines to rig other parts of the dam with explosives, said Kyrylo Budanov, the military intelligence chief.

Syrsky — relying on the intricate knowledge of a local agricultural businessman whom officials had started referring to as “The Diver” — said a targeted explosion at one of the sluices helped increase the level of the water even further around Moshchun.

The explosion at the dam was just one example of how Ukrainians savaged their own infrastructure to create obstacles for the Russians, destroying roads, blowing up bridges and ruining rail tracks.

“The water flowed and flooded the Russians, and we later found the place where the Russian marines had to throw off all their body armor and swim to stay alive,” Syrsky said.

Ukraine destroyed a dam and flooded the Irpin River, effectively blocking Russian forces at Antonov Airport from reaching Moshchun, which they saw as a gateway to Kyiv.

But later, around the third week of March, the Russians landed paratroops on the Ukrainian side of the river near Moshchun, according to Vdovychenko, the commander of the 72nd Brigade.

He informed Zaluzhny that Ukrainian forces might need to retreat from the village because they no longer had the strength and means to hold it.

“We will look for strength and means,” Zaluzhny replied.

Vdovychenko changed tactics. He began rotating forces in for no longer than three days and brought in a new battalion. “Because of the density of the shelling and the cold, it was impossible to stay longer,” he said. His troops blocked Moshchun on two sides and began bombarding with heavy artillery fire the places where the Russians were crossing or concentrating.

The Ukrainians pushed the Russians back across the river, as Moscow’s offensive began to crumble.

In the hospital, Kovalenko fielded calls from the loved ones of his lost soldiers. Three of his platoon commanders were gone. Many of the soldiers he had left in the town six miles north of Moshchun had been killed as well. The toll weighed on him. Some subordinates questioned his decisions.

“You did everything you could, as you thought best,” his twin brother, Dmytro, told him. “If people didn’t listen to you, that’s another question. These were all completely new people, everyone just mobilized, practically no one knew each other.”

After he was discharged from the hospital, Kovalenko returned to Moshchun to gather his company’s dead from a trench where they had fought. Russian artillery continued to target the village, forcing the Ukrainians to take cover amid the corpses of their comrades. When the firing eased, Kovalenko and his men carried the bodies out on foot — one by one.

## VI

Lt. Gen. Anatoliy Kryvonozhko, head of Ukraine’s Central Air Command, was in a hospital bed in Kyiv, recovering from a bad coronavirus infection on Feb. 24. As the first missiles began to hit his people at military airfields and radar stations, he pulled out his IV tube and called a driver. He was needed at his base.

“The coronavirus probably just disappears in these kinds of situations,” he said.

While in isolation, Kryvonozhko had been working remotely and preparing for a possible Russian attack. Many Ukrainian fighter jets and ground-to-air defenses had been relocated. As a result, when the first missiles hit, the Russians were often pounding empty spaces. Some jets, he and others said, were already in the air when the strikes happened — another tactic to save the fleet.

“We created fake targets for our enemies,” recalled Reznikov, the defense minister.

Kryvonozhko gave his units about 90 minutes to gather themselves after the shock of the first bombardment. In some cases, Russian missiles successfully hit their targets that morning. The barracks of the 138th Radio-Technical Brigade was destroyed, though the 50 people who had been sleeping inside miraculously survived. The siren to alert them to seek shelter had failed to turn on.

The younger pilots took rocket-propelled grenades and staked out positions to defend Vasytkiv Air Base — a runway that remained in use about an hour south of Kyiv. The older, more experienced pilots stepped forward to fly, knowing the missions were likely to be their last.

“I wouldn’t call this tradition, but it was a rule that if there was a really, really dangerous bad mission, the older guys jump in the jets,” said a Ukrainian fighter pilot who uses the call sign Moonfish. “The older guys took responsibility, like, ‘Hey, I have grown kids.’ ”

Kryvonozhko said some pilots flew three to four sorties a day to engage Russian forces. They often skipped preflight checks and took off from shortened runways that had been bombed and then repaired overnight. That Ukraine was fighting back at all seemed to surprise the Russians and cause them to change patterns, Kryvonozhko said, noting that after the initial waves, fewer Russian jets were flying into Ukraine and Moscow instead began to use more of its limited supply of precision munitions.

Ukrainian fighter jets still flying days after the invasion became symbols of a fierce resistance that was enduring — and played a pivotal role in blunting the Russian onslaught.

“Everybody, especially Russia, believed our air defense would last only a few days,” said Lt. Col. Denys Smazhny, chief specialist in the antiaircraft missile troops training section. “If not a few hours.”

On the ground, Ukrainian air defense units fired at Russian targets and immediately moved position, enabling them to survive for longer than many expected, even as they struggled against extensive Russian jamming. Col. Yuriy Perepelytsya, the commander of the 138th Radio-Technical Brigade, said his forces are never supposed to be in range of Russian artillery, but sometimes operated within 10 miles of the front line.

“We would violate all doctrine,” he said. “Putting ourselves at risk, we were increasing our chances to destroy targets.”

Air defenses remained the top target for the Russians, and Perepelytsya worried constantly about saboteurs revealing his location.

Officials with the SBU, Ukraine’s main internal security service, said Ukrainian collaborators marked some locations with paint that would be visible at night — a signal for where to direct airstrikes. In other cases, they would send coded messages containing coordinates to their Russian minders. A text with red flowers indicated a civilian infrastructure object. Green flowers were for a military installation. The text messages were signed as being from “babushka,” or grandmother, the officials said.

“The Russians had been told there wouldn’t be any air defense systems,” Perepelytsya said. “They’d enter the airspace impudently and we would destroy them.”

## **VII**

As his comrades were scrambling to stop the Russians west of Kyiv, Col. Leonid Khoda, commander of Ukraine’s 1st Tank Brigade, was mobilizing to the northeast of the capital in Honcharivske. By the time the first Russian missile hit his base on the morning of Feb. 24, Khoda had prepared for the worst. He had moved ammunition, fuel and food to camouflaged safe areas and dispersed his troops away from base into the field. He had discussed with his deputies how to slip away and form an underground resistance. He had prepared to say a final goodbye to his wife.

Hours into the war, it looked like the worst was happening.

Russian troops that would ultimately number close to 30,000 were flowing over the border from three directions toward the northern Ukrainian city of Chernihiv. Their plan, according to Ukrainian officials, was to rapidly take the city of 280,000 people and press southward along the eastern side of the Dnieper River into Kyiv within three days. Along with the forces landing at Hostomel and spreading to the western side of the capital, they would form a pincer movement on Kyiv.

Standing between the Russians and the capital’s eastern flank was Khoda, his brigade of about 2,000 troops.

“It is psychologically difficult to accept when you hear a column is coming with 10 tanks. Another column is coming with 30 armored vehicles. Behind them another column of 12 vehicles is coming,” Khoda said. “There were these waves.”

Khoda left the base and sped north to Chernihiv to establish a forward command post. Waiting beside the highway north of the city, his companies ambushed and destroyed the first Russian column, firing at the formation with artillery at such short range that the Russians had no time to react. A second Russian column fell in the same way.

The attack stalled the advancing force and gave the Ukrainians critical time to erect defenses and gather their own troops.



What ensued over the next five weeks was an underdog fight against the Russians that would play another critical role in preventing Moscow from succeeding in its “lightning strike” on the Ukrainian capital.

The Ukrainians tried to force the mass of Russian troops into narrow stretches of terrain — dirt roads that were impassable, thawing fields or swamps that would ensnare vehicles and force greater fuel consumption. Vehicles that stayed on asphalt were targeted by fast-moving Ukrainian troops. Bridges and crossings were mined and blocked.

“We would force them to take certain routes, where we would then blast them and cut them off,” said Maj. Gen. Viktor Nikolyuk, the top commander for Ukrainian forces in the northern part of the country. The strategy drew admiring plaudits at the Pentagon.

“Coming down that avenue of approach was something like 30 battle groups. A single Ukrainian brigade stopped them. I don’t know who that commander was, but he stopped them in their tracks,” Gen. Mark A. Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs, later said.

“They couldn’t get off the road. Their junior officers didn’t have any initiative,” Milley said of the Russians. “This guy was like a buzz saw, just chewing them up.”

The old Soviet way of war — in which commanders gave officers little leeway to make decisions and sought to overwhelm the enemy by sending lumbering masses of forces — remained the Russian signature, Nikolyuk said.

“We would kill two or three people, and then others would show up in their place. The first ones are still lying there, and these guys are advancing,” he said. “It’s simply 1941, where the lives of the personnel don’t mean anything to the commanders.

“The problem [also] is that they are self-confident. They think that Ukraine is small. ‘We will just override them,’ ” he continued. “ ‘We’ll roll through with tanks, and that will be that.’ ”

On the Ukrainian side, commanders who had been leading troops in the country’s east since 2014 had learned from Western partners about pushing decision-making power down the chain of command and ensuring that lower-level officers knew they had to act based on what was happening in the moment, without the crutch of headquarters.

Initiative, in any case, was forced on the officers. As had happened west of Kyiv, the Russians completely jammed the Ukrainians’ communications and satellite networks, leaving Khoda and others without a link to front-line soldiers. Ukrainian commanders moved around to their troops’ positions to communicate and issue orders.

“Military communications were completely paralyzed,” Khoda said, noting that his forces also drew on the local population. “We had to work through informants. I’m not going to put all the cards on the table, but we knew with 95 percent accuracy even their smallest movements through other means. This was all locals.”

The Ukrainian will to fight against all odds was highlighted on a hill northeast of Chernihiv that had a commanding view of the city and surrounding area. Hold this ridge, Khoda said he ordered the fighters, because otherwise the Russians will have Chernihiv “in the palm of their hand.”

For days, Ukrainian fighters defended or contested the hilltop despite savage Russian bombardment from tanks, multiple rocket launchers and, ultimately, high-explosive FAB-500 bombs that destroyed much of the ridge itself, Nikolyuk said. Nearly all the Ukrainians involved died and were found later in a makeshift grave with a cross on top, Nikolyuk said, but they didn’t surrender.

“You understand that people are prepared to defend what’s theirs and there’s no way back,” Nikolyuk said. “When you see that, you understand that you already don’t have the moral right to act in any other way.”

Many of those who died were part of Ukraine’s Territorial Defense Forces — volunteers who signed up by the thousands in the first days of the war. Though the majority were inexperienced fighters, they took on crucial and dangerous roles, providing critical extra manpower.

After six months, Ukraine has lost some 9,000 troops in all and seen more than 7,000 troops go missing, according to official Ukrainian statements, though the numbers could be higher. Russia has lost more than 15,000 troops, according to comments in late July by the head of the CIA, who said it was difficult to ascertain an exact number.

Khoda said Zelensky’s decision to stay in Kyiv spurred the troops. “Imagine there’s a war and you’re told the president has run away somewhere .... that’s demoralizing.”

The Russian air force at first dominated the skies over Chernihiv. Only in mid-March would Khoda’s brigade receive Mistral and Stinger portable anti-aircraft missiles from the United States and European allies, finally enabling them to shoot down Russian aircraft, he said.

With brute force and sheer numbers, the Russians by then had managed to sweep across the south of Chernihiv and nearly encircle the city. Ukraine’s 58th Motorized Infantry Brigade joined the fight, moving in below the city to help the 1st Tank Brigade.

The fighting culminated in a village called Lukashivka.

The Russians gathered an entire battalion tactical group of about 750 troops and piled ammunition between the white walls of an old Orthodox church, Khoda said. Russian armored vehicles flooded the village — some seven tanks, 19 infantry fighting vehicles, and 12 or 13 armored personnel carriers, in addition to trucks, he said.

If the Ukrainians didn’t push back at Lukashivka, they risked losing their last “road of life” in and out of Chernihiv.

But the Russian decision to mass troops had been a mistake. Open fields and a patchwork of tiny streams separated Lukashivka from villages held by the Ukrainians, Khoda said, leaving the Russians exposed.

“Using small groups, we went out and destroyed one or two tanks, one infantry fighting vehicle, some personnel — and simply little by little started to cut off their logistics,” Nikolyuk said.

The artillery did the rest. Much of the Russian equipment was torched.

At that moment, Khoda said, he knew the Russians would be defeated. They had lost too many people, tanks and fighting vehicles — and they no longer had sufficient forces to advance into the city of Chernihiv itself. Their logistics had been overstretched by counterattacks, time and distance.

By then, the Russians had already reached Kyiv’s eastern edge another way.

## **VIII**

It was brazen — and also foolish.

By mid-March, with its forces struggling on either side of Kyiv, Russia tried a new gambit, sending a line of tanks 225 miles westward across the center of Ukraine from the Russian border. As the bunched-up column approached the capital’s city limits, the Ukrainians struck, ambushing the tanks with artillery fire.

Nineteen vehicles were destroyed and about 48 retreated, a battalion commander in the 72nd Brigade later said. Drone footage released by the Ukrainians showed 20 Russian tanks scrambling to turn around in the mud by the highway, as the column retreated. In an intercepted call released by the Ukrainians, a Russian soldier reported numerous losses, including the regiment's commander.

The blow to the Russians came during weeks of combat for Dmytro Kovalenko's battalion in the villages along Kyiv's eastern edge.

While fighting, Kovalenko remembered the words of his late grandfather, who had survived Joseph Stalin's man-made famine in Ukraine in the 1930s and served in the Soviet military during World War II: Never trust Russians or Communists.

"They have brought a lot of suffering to my family," he said. "Now I hate them."

After the tank debacle, the Russians failed to regroup and never launched a major assault on the eastern edge of the capital. As the days went on, Ukrainian commanders monitoring Russian communications began to hear a change of tone among enemy soldiers. What had been enthusiasm had turned to panic and disappointment. Kyiv was holding and Russian woes were mounting.

Russia cut its losses and announced in late March that its troops would refocus on eastern Ukraine. Within days, they began to retreat.

"They suddenly got together one day and left," said Kovalenko, who celebrated with his twin brother, Roman.

"First of all, it was people standing up for one another and saying, 'No, we won't surrender,' " Roman said. "It was the power of their spirit."

By saving Kyiv, Ukraine protected its independence as a sovereign state. But Russia would go on to contest the boundaries of that state in a second, more demoralizing stage of the war in the country's south and east.

## **IX**

On April 4, Zelensky traveled to Bucha, the Kyiv suburb where Ukrainian officials would find 458 bodies. More than 400 bore the markings of gunfire, torture or bludgeoning.

Every day, over the previous six weeks, Zelensky had been briefed on the numbers of dead and wounded, the families separated and scattered across the country and Europe.

Though he had visited troops, stayed awake amid the sounds of nighttime artillery attacks and airstrikes, and endured threats to his own life, he had mostly been confined to the presidential office.

Soldiers sat on the floor throughout the many corridors. Snipers were posted near the windows. Zelensky had gotten used to all of it, he said, but nothing shook him as much as the visit to Bucha.

"That feeling that this is death — when there is silence and silence, and there is nothing left living," he recalled.

Corpses lay on the street. Buildings were burned out. Officials showed him bodies of people who had been subjected to horrific abuse.

"This feeling is scary," he said. "Everything is destroyed and now what? This could be the way it is everywhere. This is how they work."

Before Bucha, he said, he had been so entangled in trying to secure more weapons, approving battlefield decisions and negotiating with foreign leaders that he hadn't slowed down to fully ponder what had been lost in the victory of Kyiv.

"That moment of consciousness comes," Zelensky continued, "of what is happening, what they have done, that irreversibility, that it isn't possible to go back."

**X**

By June, Roman and Dmytro Kovalenko were in the country's east in the Donbas coal-mining region, where Russia had unleashed an artillery war reminiscent of World War I, leaving outgunned Ukrainian soldiers [pleading for more-advanced Western weapons](#).

Over a month and a half, more than two-thirds of Dmytro's company ended up wounded, missing or killed — most of the survivors left with traumatic brain injuries.

Dmytro visited his brother's position and saw how Roman, too, was suffering, wearing earmuffs to soften the reverberations of the blasts.

Within a few days, Roman was back in hospital, where he stayed until deploying again in recent days.

Earlier this month, Dmytro packed to go back to the eastern front after spending a few days outside Kyiv with his parents and his 10-year-old son. His son understands where he is going.

Dmytro said he struggles with how to say goodbye:

"I say that everything is good, that I'll be back soon. Just wait."

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HEADLINE	<b>08/24 After 6mo. war reshapes Ukraine, Russia</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/24/world/europe/ukraine-russia-six-months.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/24/world/europe/ukraine-russia-six-months.html</a>
GIST	<p>For six months, a major land war has sown horror in Europe.</p> <p>It is a war in which violence and normality coexist — death and destruction at the 1,500-mile front and packed cafes in Kyiv, just a few hundred miles to the west.</p> <p>It is a war fought in trenches and artillery duels, but defined in great part by the political whims of Americans and Europeans, whose willingness to endure inflation and energy shortages could shape the next stage of the conflict.</p> <p>And it is a war of imagery and messaging, fought between two countries whose deep family ties have helped turn social media into a battlefield of its own.</p> <p>No one knows how it will end. President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, having silenced dissent, has <a href="#">proclaimed</a> that "by and large, we haven't started anything yet in earnest." President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine, emboldened by a defiant populace and a mostly united West, has played down the chances of a settlement and urged his people not to bend.</p> <p>Will Western backing hold as Europe braces for the possibility of a winter with little Russian oil and gas? Will Mr. Putin, after strikes in Crimea and the killing of a nationalist commentator, escalate the war? And will Mr. Zelensky be able to sustain his nation's determination against a nuclear-armed foe?</p> <p>Mr. Putin now controls about 20 percent of the country. But he appears as far as ever from bringing Ukraine back into Russia's fold — and there is little indication he is prepared to stop fighting.</p>

Half a year after Russian forces massed at their neighbor's border made their move, here is how the conflict appears to the combatants, and to a continent plunged into turmoil.

### **In Ukraine, Bracing for Something 'Nasty'**

On the eve of Ukrainian Independence Day, President Volodymyr Zelensky offered a clear-eyed view of the threat facing his country.

Moscow might seek to mar the Aug. 24 celebration, which commemorates the country's 1991 separation from the Soviet Union, with "something particularly nasty, particularly cruel," Mr. Zelensky warned on Tuesday.

After all, Wednesday also marks six months since Russia invaded Ukraine, unleashing a war that has driven many Ukrainians from their homes, killed thousands of troops and shaken the economy. Officials warned that Russia may strike with a volley of cruise missiles, or stage show trials of Ukrainian prisoners of war in the occupied city of Mariupol.

But Mr. Zelensky said the Ukrainian authorities planned no extraordinary precautions if Kyiv, the capital, was hit. The Ukrainian government will respond "the same as now" or any other day, he said at a news conference.

In towns along the front, in Russian-occupied areas and at the sites hit by long-range missile strikes, the most intense war in Europe since World War II burns with visible force.

But acclimated to risk, Ukrainians are creeping back to a sense of normality after the shock of the winter invasion.

After some early successes by the Ukrainian Army in repelling the Russian military from assaults on Kyiv and northern Ukraine, families prepared for the start of school. Patrons packed sidewalk cafes.

Regions where a majority of Ukrainians live are stable and relatively safe, the government still stands, and the army, equipped with ever-more-potent Western weaponry, remains intact.

"The original threat was that the Russian Army, being the second-largest in the world, would establish air superiority and domination," said Andriy Zagorodnyuk, a former Ukrainian minister of defense. "We managed to learn how to stop them."

But the cratering economy, the risk of airstrikes and the toll of attrition warfare could chip away at Ukraine's ability to resist, he said. At the six-month mark, he said, survival is not the same as victory, or even a clear path toward it.

"We cannot stop, and we cannot move into a boring, low-intensity war," Mr. Zagorodnyuk said. "We need to think how we can squeeze them out."

At the least, the war is far from where Moscow had hoped it would be — a fact that Ukrainians drove home with taunts and a mocking parade this week of about 80 burned and disabled Russian tanks and military vehicles in Kyiv. Ukrainian children climbed onto the wreckage; passers-by stopped for selfies.

"In February, the Russians were planning a parade," the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense said on Twitter. "Six months into the large-scale war, the shameful display of rusty Russian metal is a reminder to all dictators how their plans may be ruined by a free and courageous nation."

Still, the fragile normality masks the staggering toll the war has taken on Ukraine. The U.N. High Commissioner for human rights has reported that 5,587 civilians have been killed and 7,890 wounded — and acknowledged that these figures are most likely drastic undercounts.

	<p>This week, Valeriy Zaluzhnyi, the Ukrainian commander of the armed forces, said that about 9,000 Ukrainian soldiers had died in the six months of combat.</p> <p>In his speech, Mr. Zelensky suggested Ukrainians could hardly expect anything worse from Russia than the blows already absorbed.</p> <p>But Ukrainians are preparing.</p> <p>Kharkiv went into lockdown and announced a curfew for Wednesday. At checkpoints in Kyiv, soldiers who had for months waved through cars searched them carefully.</p> <p>Mr. Zelensky, advisers said, would record a celebratory video to avoid presenting a public target.</p> <p>“It is important to never, not for a minute, relent to the enemy’s pressure,” Mr. Zelensky said. “Don’t bend, don’t show weakness.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/24 In Russia, hardline nationalists reign</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/24/world/europe/ukraine-russia-six-months.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/24/world/europe/ukraine-russia-six-months.html</a>
GIST	<p>Few Russians could imagine in February that President Vladimir V. Putin would order a sweeping invasion of Ukraine. Even pro-Kremlin commentators dismissed the idea as foolishly risky and needlessly cruel. And Mr. Putin, keeping his plans from all but his closest advisers, by all accounts expected the war to be over in days.</p> <p>Then came the mismanaged invasion, the crush of sanctions, the flight of antiwar Russians, a humiliating retreat from Ukraine’s capital, <a href="#">pictures</a> of Russian atrocities and mounting evidence of a devastating toll among Russian troops.</p> <p>Rather than being greeted as a liberator, Mr. Putin was the instigator of Europe’s biggest land war since World War II.</p> <p>But now, at the war’s six-month mark, Mr. Putin is still fighting — and others have joined him.</p> <p>“One country, one president, one victory,” intoned Leonid Slutsky, a nationalist lawmaker, at a memorial service on Tuesday for the pro-war pundit Daria Dugina, whose death in <a href="#">a car bombing last weekend</a> has emerged as the latest inflection point in the war.</p> <p>The Russia that remains after half a year of war is both stunningly different and shockingly unchanged.</p> <p>What remained of independent news media, politics and culture — voices that had survived other crackdowns by Mr. Putin — <a href="#">all but evaporated</a>, replaced by a militant ultranationalism <a href="#">piped through state television</a>. The angry <a href="#">antiwar rallies</a> of the invasion’s first weeks have petered out, with even a dissenting social media post punishable by up to 15 years in prison under <a href="#">a censorship law</a> passed in March.</p> <p>Yet Mr. Putin has also <a href="#">resisted the calls</a> of the invasion’s most ardent supporters to put the entire nation on a war footing. His government has succeeded in <a href="#">blunting the impact</a> of economic sanctions on daily life while avoiding a large-scale military draft. That may explain why the Levada Center, an independent pollster, found last month that 43 percent of Russians say they are paying little to no attention to events in Ukraine.</p> <p>With his forces bogged down at the front, Mr. Putin seems to have settled into waging a war of attrition while staying vague about what sort of deal to end the war he would be prepared to accept. He accuses the West, with its deliveries of increasingly potent heavy weaponry to Kyiv, of fighting Russia “to the last Ukrainian” — an insistence that he can still outlast the enemy.</p>

The coming winter and Europe's reliance on Russian energy supplies are emboldening Mr. Putin to fight on until divisions emerge in the West or Ukraine's army and government are exhausted. But the war's supporters are increasingly questioning that approach, citing explosions in the occupied Crimean Peninsula and the blast that killed Ms. Dugina on a highway in an affluent Moscow suburb as evidence that the Kremlin may be underestimating its adversaries.

Her father, the ultranationalist theorist Aleksandr Dugin, said at her memorial service on Tuesday what her wish now would be: "Don't glorify me, but fight for our great country."

Kyiv has denied any role in her death, but Russia has accused it of responsibility, and it appears to have given new momentum to the demands of Russia's hard-liners that Mr. Putin escalate the assault on Ukraine. They see the war as not just about regaining a lost empire, but about stripping the last vestiges of liberalism from Russian society.

"For them, the deeper the country gets into this catastrophe," said the Russian political expert Marat Guelman, "the less the chance that at some moment there will be a turn."

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HEADLINE	<b>08/24 Grim ledger of war grows longer</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/24/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-toll.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/24/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-toll.html</a>
GIST	<p>Day after day for 181 days, the grim ledger of Russia's invasion of Ukraine grows longer with each missile strike, burst of gunfire and report of atrocities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ukrainian civilians have <b>paid a heavy price</b>: <a href="#">5,587 are confirmed dead</a>, and the true number is believed to be in the tens of thousands. The number of <b>refugees</b> has <a href="#">surpassed 6.6 million</a>.</li><li>Military losses have been <b>heavy on both sides</b>, with <a href="#">about 9,000 Ukrainians</a> and as many as 25,000 Russians said to be killed.</li><li>Ukraine has <b>lost control</b> of <a href="#">20 percent of its territory</a> to Russian forces and their proxies in recent years.</li><li>The destruction has already <b>cost Ukraine</b> at least \$113.5 billion, and it may need <a href="#">more than \$200 billion</a> to rebuild.</li><li>Donor nations have <a href="#">pledged</a> to give Ukraine <b>more than \$83 billion</b> in total.</li><li>Ukrainian <b>agricultural production</b> and other countries that depend on it <a href="#">have been hit hard</a>. Even with grain ships on the move again, the world hunger crisis is dire.</li></ul> <p><b>The toll on civilians</b></p> <p>On Monday, the United Nations <a href="#">reported</a> that it had confirmed the deaths of 5,587 civilians, including 149 girls, 175 boys and 38 children whose sex is unknown. At least 7,890 civilians were confirmed to be injured, it said.</p> <p>But those are only the confirmed civilian casualties. The true numbers, U.N. officials concede, are without doubt far higher.</p> <p>The actual toll is probably tens of thousands of civilians. That is the estimate Ukrainian officials have arrived at after months of <a href="#">recovering bodies</a>.</p> <p>In Bucha, near the capital, residents are <a href="#">still burying</a> the roughly 400 civilians killed during a month of Russian occupation. At least 1,500 civilians were killed in Kyiv, Ukraine's capital, during Russia's failed attack, according to Ihor Klymenko, Ukraine's chief of police.</p> <p>And in Mariupol, the southern city pulverized by months of Russian siege, Ukrainian officials believe that at least 22,000 people were killed. They cite witness accounts, satellite imagery of mass graves and footage showing bodies in the streets.</p> <p><b>The military casualties</b></p>



Russia and Ukraine have kept their military casualties a closely guarded secret, though Western analysts believe both have sustained heavy losses.

Gen. Valeriy Zaluzhnyi, the top commander of Ukraine's armed forces, said Monday that [about 9,000 Ukrainians](#) had been killed at the front. Speaking at a conference for veterans, he did not say whether that included all the branches of Ukraine's military; the number could not be independently verified. In comparison, in [the eight-year conflict](#) between Ukraine and Russia-backed forces, around 13,000 Ukrainian soldiers and civilians were killed.

Russia last gave an official military toll in March, when it said that 1,351 of its troops had been killed. At the time, American officials estimated the figure to be around 5,000.

Four months later, the British military estimated that 25,000 Russians had been killed and tens of thousands more wounded. And this month, [Pentagon officials estimated that 70,000 to 80,000 Russians have been killed or wounded](#); they put the number of deaths at 20,000. U.S. officials said their estimates were based on satellite imagery, communication intercepts, social media and on-the-ground media reports.

Before the full-scale invasion, the Russian military had [about 900,000 active-duty troops](#). British officials estimated that the initial invasion force [had about 300,000](#) troops, including support units. U.S. defense officials [say](#) Russia has committed nearly 85 percent of its fielded army to the war.

### **Refugees and displaced people**

More than 6.6 million refugees from Ukraine have been recorded across Europe, [according to the United Nations'](#) latest estimate. Of those, more than 3.8 million people have registered for Temporary Protection or similar national protection schemes in Europe.

Within Ukraine, roughly seven million people have been displaced internally, U.N. officials [estimate](#). About 13 million are stranded or unable to escape contested ground because of fighting, ruined bridges and roads, and a lack of resources.

### **The homes, towns and cities destroyed**

Russian shelling and missile strikes across Ukraine have destroyed more than 130,000 buildings since February, according to [research by the Kyiv School of Economics](#), drawing on information from Ukrainian government ministries.

Since February, 311 bridges have been damaged or destroyed; 188,000 private cars have been damaged, destroyed or seized; and more than 15,400 miles of road damaged or destroyed.

The range of buildings that have been damaged, destroyed or seized is vast, the researchers reported: at least 115,000 private houses and 15,000 apartments; 2,290 educational facilities, including 798 kindergartens; 1,991 shops and 27 shopping centers; 934 health care facilities and 715 [cultural facilities](#); 511 administrative buildings, 28 oil depots and 18 civilian airports.

### **Territory seized**

Years before the full-scale invasion of Ukraine began, Russia had illegally annexed Crimea and propped up separatist fighters who occupied about 6,500 square miles of eastern Ukraine: two regions totaling about 7 percent of Ukraine's 233,000 square miles.

Now, Ukrainian officials say, Russia has taken control of about 20 percent of its territory, including all of Luhansk Province in the east and most of the Kherson region in the south.

### **The front**

The front line stretches [about 1,500 miles](#) from southern Ukraine through the eastern Donetsk Province into the northeastern Kharkiv region. In mid-August, General Zaluzhnyi said Russian forces were shelling 700 to 800 Ukrainian positions a day in the south and east.

Western analysts say Russia has lost a significant amount of armored and heavy weapons. Colin Kahl, the Pentagon's under secretary of defense for policy, said this month that Russian forces have most likely lost between 3,000 and 4,000 armored vehicles.

Ukraine and Russia have each expended vast amounts of ammunition.

Analysts estimate that Russia is firing around 10,000 artillery shells a day, down from a peak of as much as 20,000 during the campaign to take Luhansk, and that Ukraine is firing several thousand artillery rounds a month.

### **The cost for Ukraine**

As of Monday, the Kyiv School of Economics [estimated](#), the damage to Ukraine's economy from the destruction of buildings and infrastructure amounted to \$113.5 billion. The researchers estimated the minimum money needed for recovery is almost \$200 billion.

The Ukrainian government has estimated that it needs \$5 billion a month to keep essential services and its battered economy running — a figure likely to increase in the fall and winter — and eventually a total of [\\$750 billion](#) for recovery.

### **An outpouring of aid**

The United States has [pledged more than \\$54 billion](#) in overall aid to Ukraine, the most of any nation. Since Feb. 24, the Biden administration has provided more than [\\$9.9 billion](#) in military assistance, the State Department says. That includes dozens of armored vehicles and artillery systems, [tens of thousands of shells](#) and [16 HIMARS](#) launchers, an advanced rocket system that Western analysts believe is helping Ukraine disrupt Russian supply lines.

Britain has pledged the second-most military aid, totaling \$4 billion, according to the Kiel Institute for the World Economy, which has been [tracking aid](#) since the war began. That is followed by European Union institutions (\$2.5 billion), Poland (\$1.8 billion) and Germany (\$1.2 billion).

According to the Kiel researchers, E.U. institutions have pledged the most financial assistance to Ukraine at \$12.3 billion, followed by the United States (\$10.3 billion), Britain (\$2.1 billion), Canada (\$1.8 billion) and Germany (\$1.15 billion). The U.S. aid includes [\\$8.5 billion in direct budgetary support](#) to Ukraine's government that has been disbursed in installments; it has also provided more than \$1.5 billion in humanitarian aid to Ukraine and the region.

In all, donor nations have committed more than \$83 billion in aid to Ukraine.

But Christoph Trebesch, an economist at the Kiel Institute, said money was reaching Ukraine "very slowly," a sign of the political disagreements in Europe.

"Sending multiple rocket launchers is hard. Sending money is much easier," he said. "The monetary side shows that it has a lot to do with political will and things being dragged out."

### **The grain crisis**

The war will [cost Ukraine's farmers and agribusiness companies](#) \$23 billion in lost profits, destroyed equipment and transportation costs, according to Ukrainian studies. Ukraine's wheat exports, worth \$5.1 billion last year, will fall by nearly half after this year's harvest, the U.S. Department of Agriculture [forecast](#).

Ukrainian officials estimate that Russia's Black Sea blockade trapped [about 20 million tons of grain for months](#).

Starting this month, [more than 30 cargo ships](#) will set out from Black Sea ports carrying 721,449 metric tons of foodstuffs under a deal mediated by Turkey and endorsed by the U.N., a spokeswoman for the initiative said on Monday.

	<p>In mid-August, <a href="#">the first chartered ship</a> departed toward a hunger-stricken part of Africa, carrying 23,000 metric tons of wheat.</p> <p>But regions like the Horn of Africa need vastly more food supplies. As many as 50 million people in 45 countries are on the brink of famine, <a href="#">according to</a> the U.N.'s World Food Program. As many as 828 million people were undernourished last year, the Food and Agriculture Organization <a href="#">estimated</a>.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/24 Ukraine Independence Day; wary of attacks</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/24/world/ukraine-russia-war-news#ukraines-independence-day-is-just-another-day-of-war-for-civilians-on-the-front">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/24/world/ukraine-russia-war-news#ukraines-independence-day-is-just-another-day-of-war-for-civilians-on-the-front</a>
GIST	<p>PARASKOVIIVKA, Ukraine — For some civilians in Ukraine's eastern Donbas region, where wilted sunflower fields, debris-covered highways and the distant thud of artillery serve as the gates to the war's front line, the country's Independence Day on Wednesday means little.</p> <p>"We have no news — nothing — we live in the darkness. What is going on out there?" asked Antolii, a shirtless resident of Paraskoviivka, a small salt-mining town in the province of Donetsk, where Russian troops have slowly taken territory in recent weeks.</p> <p>That does not mean the 31st anniversary of Ukraine's independence from the Soviet Union, marked on Aug. 24, is insignificant, and Ukrainian authorities have urged people across the country to be on guard, fearful that the Russians will launch a fresh set of attacks on civilians far from the front.</p> <p>Curfews are in place, mass gatherings are restricted and some residents of big cities are told to stay home for the day.</p> <p>But after six months of war, and Russia's grinding campaign to capture the mineral-rich Donbas region, Wednesday is just another day on a calendar for many Ukrainian civilians on the front lines.</p> <p>Cold winter shelters warmed with the approaching spring. The summer heat signaled treks to nearby wells for water. And the Russian artillery strikes got closer and closer as the Ukrainian military slowly lost ground.</p> <p>"It's been the same continuous shelling for weeks here, especially at nights," said Antolii, who declined to give his last name, before offering a bag of tea to a pair of visiting New York Times reporters and wandering off.</p> <p>Antolii's town has been without water for a month and without electricity for two weeks. It is roughly five miles away from Russian positions.</p> <p>Another man named Antolii in Paraskoviivka said the town had been celebrating Independence Day since 1992. "Nothing is going to happen," he said. "We hope for the better."</p> <p>Nina Fedorivna, a woman in a nearby town, said plainly: "We have constant shelling going on here, round-the-clock, so it won't be anything new if we're shelled on Independence Day."</p> <p>Further south, roughly two miles from Russian positions in the small town of New York, which takes its name from the U.S. city, the smell of burning sunflower seeds filled the air. A factory where the seeds were stored was shelled on Sunday and had been slowly burning since.</p> <p>Svitlana, whose older family member was being evacuated by a group of volunteers called the BASE.ua, looked on as the man was loaded into a van already filled with other evacuees. When asked if she was worried about increased Russian attacks on Wednesday, she shrugged, looking in the direction of the burning factory.</p>

	“We don’t know what’s going to happen,” Svitlana said quietly.
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HEADLINE	<b>08/24 Zelensky vows to take back Crimea</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/24/world/ukraine-russia-war-news#on-the-eve-of-ukraines-independence-day-zelensky-vows-to-take-back-crimea">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/24/world/ukraine-russia-war-news#on-the-eve-of-ukraines-independence-day-zelensky-vows-to-take-back-crimea</a>
GIST	<p>He spoke with the same resoluteness and composure as he has almost everyday for the last six months, the same furrow between his brows, the same conviction in his voice.</p> <p>How does a country mark a day of independence, when its sovereignty is being threatened, when some of its people are living under occupation, when its land is being fought over, street by street? On the eve of Ukraine’s Independence Day, President Volodymyr Zelensky told his people the national holiday was all the more important because the nation was under threat.</p> <p>“It happens at a time when we are fighting against the most dreadful threat to our statehood and at the same time when we have achieved the greatest national unity,” <a href="#">he said</a>, clad in a olive-green version of the vyshyvanka, the traditional garb of Ukraine, embroidered with an armored vehicle and a tank.</p> <p>“That is why we endured,” he added. “Because we united and united the world around true values.”</p> <p>Echoing U.S. intelligence assessments and his own government’s warnings in recent days, he urged Ukrainians to prepare for Russia to escalate <a href="#">attacks on civilians</a> around Wednesday’s holiday, which marks Ukraine’s break from the Soviet Union and coincides with six months since the start of Russia’s invasion.</p> <p>“Tomorrow is an important day for all of us. And that is why this day, unfortunately, is also important for our enemy,” he said. “We must be aware that tomorrow hideous Russian provocations and brutal strikes are possible.”</p> <p>He used the occasion to highlight Russia’s land grab beyond the now six-month-old war, by focusing his day and his speech on the Crimean peninsula, which was seized by Russia in 2014. Ukraine hosted a day of diplomatic meeting s on the annexation of Crimea, which <a href="#">both Russia and Ukraine consider</a> strategically and historically critical and Vladimir V. Putin, the Russian president, has called a “holy land” and “sacred place” for his country.</p> <p>Mr. Zelensky vowed to take back the peninsula, which has been subject to stunning Ukrainian attacks in recent weeks deep inside Russian-occupied territory — a stance that appears to make diplomatic resolution of the war increasingly remote.</p> <p>“Crimea is Ukraine. Crimea is an integral part of our people,” he said. “Russian aggression began in Crimea, and its finale will be in Crimea as well.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/24 Ukraine nuclear operators work at gunpoint</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/24/world/ukraine-russia-war-news#in-ukraine-a-nuclear-plant-is-held-hostage">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/24/world/ukraine-russia-war-news#in-ukraine-a-nuclear-plant-is-held-hostage</a>
GIST	<p>KYIV, Ukraine — In the winter darkness, tracer rounds from Russian armored vehicles streaked past nuclear reactors and high-tension electrical lines. A fire broke out. Shrapnel sprayed a reactor containment vessel.</p> <p>In the control room of Reactor No. 3, operators were horrified.</p>

“Stop firing at the nuclear facility,” one begged over the station’s loudspeakers. “You are endangering the safety of the entire world.”

The danger at the [Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant](#) — a sprawl of cooling towers, nuclear reactors, machine rooms and radioactive waste storage sites — was actually graver than even those who worked there knew at the time.

A large caliber bullet had pierced an outer wall of Reactor No. 4 but, most worrying and not disclosed at the time, an artillery shell had struck an electrical transformer at Reactor No. 6, which was filled with flammable cooling oil, plant employees subsequently learned and told The New York Times. Both reactors were active.

“By happy coincidence, it didn’t burn,” said an engineer, Oleksiy, who insisted that his last name not be publicly disclosed out of security concerns.

Five months later, with artillery fire once again striking the plant, the specter of a possible nuclear catastrophe has gripped the world’s attention. Urgent negotiations are taking place to try to arrange a [visit by experts from the International Atomic Energy Agency](#).

Officials from the United States, the European Union and the United Nations have called for [the creation of a demilitarized zone](#), as Ukraine and Russia [each accuse the other of preparing attacks](#) on the plant — leading many to [fear that Zaporizhzhia is in greater peril than ever](#).

Standing between the world and a nuclear calamity are the Ukrainian workers who know the plant intimately, having run it for years with the utmost precaution in a sleepy corner of southern Ukraine where the city and the plant had once lived in a steady and predictable symbiosis before the Russians arrived.

Today, under Russian occupation, the plant employees are both hostages and essential workers — Ukrainian engineers duty bound to prevent disaster while working under the watchful eye of Russian snipers.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 New booster campaign after Labor Day</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/23/us/politics/covid-booster-shots-biden.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/23/us/politics/covid-booster-shots-biden.html</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — The Biden administration plans to offer the next generation of coronavirus booster shots to Americans 12 and older soon after Labor Day, a campaign that federal officials hope will reduce deaths from Covid-19 and protect against an expected winter surge.</p> <p>Dr. Peter Marks, the top vaccine regulator for the Food and Drug Administration, said in an interview on Tuesday that while he could not discuss timing, his team was close to authorizing updated doses that would target the versions of the virus now circulating.</p> <p>Even though those formulations have not been tested in humans, he said, the agency has “extremely good” data showing that the shots are safe and will be effective. “How confident am I?” he said. “I’m extremely confident.”</p> <p>This week, both Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech finalized their submissions to the F.D.A. asking for emergency authorization of booster shots aimed at BA.5 and another subvariant of Omicron that together account for most coronavirus cases in the United States.</p> <p>Federal health officials say they are eager to offer the updated boosters as quickly as possible, pointing to a death toll that now averages about 450 Americans per day and could rise in the coming months as people spend more time indoors.</p>

“We have really got to do better to protect the American public,” Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, President Biden’s chief medical adviser, said in an interview on Tuesday. “We are in the middle of a BA.5 outbreak here, and we are nowhere near where we want to be.”

The Biden administration has struggled to convince Americans of the need for successive vaccinations. Only about two-thirds of the population has been inoculated with the primary series of two shots, and far fewer have received booster doses.

Some outside scientists have said the government is moving too fast to clear redesigned shots, arguing that the existing vaccines provide strong protection against severe disease.

“Deaths are concentrated in unvaccinated people and people with serious health conditions,” said John P. Moore, a virologist at Weill Cornell Medicine. He said the extra protection that the new shots would provide against infection could be “weak to nonexistent.”

Jeremy Kamil, a virologist at Louisiana State University Health Shreveport, said that although he supported new boosters, many people had immunity because of recent infections. “Even if we get this out in the next 10 days, how many people are left who haven’t gotten Omicron?” he said.

Other scientists said that the government’s plan made sense given how the virus had changed and the evidence that immunity wanes over time. Dr. Marks said that if regulators waited for additional data or recommendations from outside experts, the virus might evolve further and “we may have lost a bunch of individuals who could otherwise be sitting around at the dinner table together.”

In a sign of impending action from the F.D.A., the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has scheduled a two-day meeting of its advisory panel of experts on the matter for Sept. 1 and 2. The C.D.C. director, Rochelle P. Walensky, would then make a final decision on whether to roll out the new doses. Shipments to states could begin as early as next week, according to officials familiar with the plan.

The government plans to offer the new Pfizer booster to everyone 12 and older while limiting the new Moderna shot to adults. People who have already received the initial two-shot series of either vaccine would be eligible. So would those who have received the initial shots plus one or two booster shots. The new booster campaign could be broadened to younger children later.

Dr. Marks suggested that the biggest obstacle to the effort was the level of complacency that had set in, even as the pandemic continued to exact what he called an “unacceptable” death toll.

He said the F.D.A. might recommend that people who had recently received a Covid vaccine dose wait “a few months” before getting the new shot, even if they were otherwise eligible. He said the C.D.C. might weigh in on whether people who were recently infected with the virus should also wait.

As of mid-August, the federal government had bought more than 170 million doses of the updated version of the vaccines. This month, the C.D.C. laid out detailed plans to offer the shots, warning that the supply would be “sufficient but finite” and saying that doses should be “directed to providers with expected demand among eligible patients.”

The new shots combine the original vaccine with components aimed at the BA.4 and BA.5, Omicron’s recent subvariants. Officials argue that the new formulations will deliver a stronger boost to the immune system than the existing vaccines provide.

Unlike earlier shots, the redesigned formulations have not been tested widely on humans; instead, the companies have submitted data from mice trials. Some vaccine experts have complained that animal data is too preliminary and say regulators should wait for results of human clinical trials.



But Dr. Fauci said using animal data was “not anything different than we always do” in updating the flu vaccine each year. Dr. Marks said other evidence included the extensive track record with the existing vaccines and a series of earlier human trials with variant-specific formulations.

“I take great issue with those who say, ‘Oh, you’re just approving this with mouse data,’” he said. “We’re authorizing this with the totality of the evidence that we have.”

Moderna and Pfizer have both submitted clinical data from human studies of redesigned shots targeting the original version of the Omicron variant. Britain last week authorized that version of Moderna’s vaccine, but U.S. regulators asked for formulations aimed at Omicron’s newer subvariants.

Researchers are still working to answer key questions about the protection that the new vaccines deliver, including the levels of antibodies the shots generate in humans and how those antibodies protect people. Moderna began human trials of its new vaccine this month, and Pfizer plans to do the same later in the month. Initial data from those trials is expected later this year.

Dr. Moore, the virologist at Weill Cornell Medicine, said the administration’s plans could backfire if the fall or winter brings a wave of disease despite the new boosters, potentially reducing overall confidence in Covid-19 vaccines.

“My issue all along has been: Is there enough data to really justify the effort?” Dr. Moore said. “The potential downside is, if the public thinks that this Omicron-containing booster is some kind of magic bullet that will give them superstrong protection from infection, is there a risk that they will change their behavior to increase their exposure?”

The F.D.A. will decide whether to authorize the retooled doses without seeking a recommendation from its outside advisory panel of experts, a step it usually takes before making new vaccines available. Critics have complained that regulators have bypassed the panel at crucial steps.

Dr. Marks defended the decision, saying a late June meeting of the advisory panel on the need to revise the vaccines had given regulators “everything we needed.” The committee voted overwhelming then in favor of updating the vaccines to work better against Omicron or its subvariants, but it did not consider specific formulations.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Charges dropped in fatal police shooting</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/23/us/rayshard-brooks-officers-no-charges.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/23/us/rayshard-brooks-officers-no-charges.html</a>
GIST	<p>ATLANTA — More than two years after Rayshard Brooks, a 27-year-old Black man, was fatally shot by a white police officer in the parking lot of an Atlanta fast-food restaurant, a prosecutor has determined that the officer who fired, as well as another officer on the scene, “committed no crimes” in the incident.</p> <p>The decision to drop charges against the two Atlanta officers was announced in a news conference on Tuesday by Pete Skandalakis, a veteran former Georgia prosecutor appointed to handle the case by Chris Carr, the Georgia attorney general. Mr. Skandalakis and another former prosecutor, Danny Porter, presided over a multimedia presentation about the June 2020 incident, which showed how Mr. Brooks, after resisting being handcuffed, sparked a violent fight with the officers, during which Mr. Brooks took Officer Devin Brosnan’s Taser and fired it at the officers.</p> <p>The prosecutors said that these actions gave the other officer, Garrett Rolfe, justification to use deadly force. Mr. Rolfe fired three shots at Mr. Brooks, hitting him twice, in the back and buttocks.</p> <p>“It is my conclusion that the use of deadly force was objectively reasonable and that they did not act with criminal intent,” Mr. Porter said.</p>



Mr. Rolfe was initially charged with 11 counts, including murder, and Mr. Brosnan faced a number of lesser charges. The prosecutors said they would move to vacate those charges. Mr. Rolfe was fired from the Police Department the day after the shooting, but reinstated in May 2021 by the city's civil service review board. Both men have been on paid administrative leave pending resolution of their case.

Now that the resolution has come, it seems unlikely to settle a matter that triggered a period of intense protest and institutional instability in Atlanta, a city with a sizable Black population that considers itself an unofficial capital of the civil rights movement. Mr. Brooks was killed a few weeks after the murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer. The Atlanta killing sparked fresh rounds of street demonstrations and became part of the broader national debate about the treatment of Black Americans at the hands of the police.

At the time, Stacey Abrams, the current Democratic candidate for Georgia governor, called the incident a "murder." Donald J. Trump, then the president, also weighed in, saying that people should not resist police officers. Mr. Trump also said he hoped Mr. Rolfe "gets a fair shake" in the legal system.

In the wake of the shooting, the Atlanta police chief at the time, Erika Shields, resigned, and the Wendy's restaurant where the incident occurred was burned down. The area around the site was dominated for days by protesters, some of whom were armed and threatened passers-by. On July 4, 2020, an 8-year-old girl, Secorica Turner, was fatally shot while being driven through the area in an SUV.

As Mr. Porter noted, the police encounter with Mr. Brooks began cordially in the parking lot of a Wendy's restaurant in South Atlanta, as Mr. Brosnan responded to a 911 call. Restaurant patrons had complained that Mr. Brooks had fallen asleep, while behind the wheel of his car, in the drive-through lane. The interaction with Mr. Brooks remained businesslike as Mr. Rolfe subjected him to a drunken-driving breath test, which Mr. Brooks failed.

But as Mr. Rolfe moved to handcuff Mr. Brooks and place him under arrest, Mr. Brooks lunged forward, instigating a brawl that left Mr. Brosnan with a concussion. Mr. Brooks stole Mr. Brosnan's Taser and shot him with it. As Mr. Brooks ran away, he pointed and fired the Taser at Mr. Rolfe, who then fired his handgun at Mr. Brooks.

In an interview on Tuesday, Gerald A. Griggs, the president of the Georgia N.A.A.C.P., criticized the decision by Mr. Skandalakis, and called upon Atlanta residents to push for a new prosecutor to be appointed who would take the case to a grand jury. Mr. Griggs said that shooting Mr. Brooks might have been justified just at the point when he was fighting with the officers. But Mr. Griggs noted that Mr. Brooks was shot while he was running away.

"He wasn't a threat to anybody at that point," Mr. Griggs said.

Video shows that while Mr. Brooks was running from the officers, he turned his body and aimed the Taser at Mr. Rolfe. "When Brooks takes the Taser, he now becomes basically a person with an offensive position," Mr. Skandalakis said. "He can incapacitate the officers. A Taser in the hands of a person who is not trained can also be deadly."

Some observers have noted that at the time Mr. Rolfe fired his handgun, Mr. Brooks had expended the two shots that the Taser was capable of firing, essentially rendering it ineffective.

But Mr. Skandalakis cited a ruling from the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals that says that such situations must be judged "through the eyes of the officer on the scene," rather than from the comfort of an office or desk, where one has the benefit of hindsight and doesn't have the pressure of having to make split-second, life and death decisions.

Mr. Skandalakis said it was reasonable to assume that Mr. Rolfe might not have counted the number of times the Taser was fired in the midst of the violent incident that played out in a matter of seconds.

Mr. Skandalakis refuted earlier assertions made by Paul L. Howard Jr., the former Fulton County district attorney, that Mr. Rolfe had kicked Mr. Brooks after the shooting and that the two officers had declined to render first aid to Mr. Brooks. Mr. Skandalakis said that the “frame by frame analysis” of video footage showed no evidence of a kicking, and that a number of witnesses saw the officers trying to render medical aid.

In an interview on Tuesday, Gymaco Brooks, 50, Mr. Brooks’s cousin, said he was disheartened by the decision and disputed the idea that a Taser should be considered a deadly weapon: “Some things just don’t make sense,” he said.

Amanda Clark Palmer, a lawyer for Mr. Brosnan, said in a statement on Tuesday that the decision was “long overdue.”

“Despite his own injuries,” she said, Mr. Brosnan “called for and personally rendered aid to Mr. Brooks after the shooting. At no point did he assault or abuse Mr. Brooks.”

Noah H. Pines, a lawyer for Mr. Rolfe, said that his client was “relieved.”

“Nothing that was said during the press conference today was a surprise to us. Because we knew the law, and the law justified Garrett Rolfe’s actions. And we knew the evidence. And the evidence justified Garrett Rolfe’s actions.”

Mr. Pines also accused Mr. Howard, the former district attorney, of charging the men for political reasons. Mr. Howard, who could not be reached for comment on Tuesday, was involved in a tight re-election bid at the time in a race that was won by Fani T. Willis, the current Fulton County district attorney.

In January, Ms. Willis wrote to Mr. Carr, the state attorney general, alleging that Mr. Howard had engaged in misconduct, including using videos of the Brooks shooting in campaign commercials in violation of state bar association rules. As a result, Ms. Willis argued, there was “sufficient question of the appropriateness” of the Atlanta-based prosecutor’s office to continue handling the case.

Ms. Willis asked Mr. Carr to refer the case to a special prosecutor. He initially declined, but the courts eventually sided with Ms. Willis, prompting Mr. Carr to choose Mr. Skandalakis, a former prosecutor for a stretch of West Georgia who currently serves as the executive director of the Prosecuting Attorneys’ Council of Georgia.

At the news conference, a reporter noted that Mr. Skandalakis and Mr. Porter, a former prosecutor in suburban Gwinnett County, were both white men, and another reporter asked if race played any role in the shooting.

“I don’t change the facts based on the color of a person’s skin,” Mr. Skandalakis said. He added: “I do not think this shooting was racially motivated.”

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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Europe rivers reveal wrecks, relics, bombs</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/23/world/europe/danube-river-shipwrecks-drought.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/23/world/europe/danube-river-shipwrecks-drought.html</a>
GIST	<p>BERLIN — From the depths of the mighty Danube River, the hulking wrecks of more than a dozen German World War II ships have risen once again, exposed by a drought that has starved Europe’s rivers and led to some of the lowest water levels of the past century.</p> <p>The exposed wrecks had been on the river’s bottom for nearly eight decades and emerge only when the water level is extremely low. An extraordinarily hot and dry summer rippling across Europe has dropped water levels precipitously, creating a hazard for local river transport and fishing on the Danube.</p>

More broadly, the scorching weather has caused alarm across the continent as heat waves have increased at a faster rate, with scientists pointing to global warming and other factors as playing major roles.

The extreme temperatures have led to lower harvests and strained [Europe's ability to create its own energy supply](#). They have reduced hydropower in Norway and threatened nuclear reactors in France. Britain banned the use of outdoor hoses after England experienced its driest July since 1935. In Spain, towns in Andalusia have restricted water usage. In Germany, environmentalists are concerned that dried up lakes and rivers in the center of the country threaten the survival of fish and other wildlife.

The drought has also brought sustained interest in relics dating back thousands of years that sometimes surface as water levels drop in rivers across Europe.

The foundations of a 2,000-year-old bridge in Rome emerged in the Tiber this summer. In Spain, the Dolmen of Guadalperal, a four- to five-millennium-old megalithic monument often compared to Stonehenge, rose from the waters west of Madrid. Earlier, a village in Spain, which had been abandoned and submerged when artificial reservoirs were built in the 1960s, became visible after years under water. And in July, fishermen found a 450-kilogram bomb in the Po River in Italy.

The German ships exposed in the Danube — Europe's second-longest river — had been part of Nazi Germany's Black Sea fleet. They were sunk by the retreating German Navy in 1944 to prevent them from falling into the hands of the advancing Soviet Army.

The wrecks contain nearly 10,000 pieces of unexploded ordnance according to the Serbian authorities, which put the cost of removing the vessels and munition at nearly \$30 million.

"The German flotilla has left behind a big ecological disaster that threatens us, people of Prahovo," Velimir Trajilovic, 74, a local retiree who wrote a book about the German ships, told Reuters.

So-called hunger stones have also resurfaced as rivers have run low. The stones carry engravings from years past when water levels dropped, and the local populations knew the harvest would be bad and the ensuing year tough.

One widely reported example appeared again in the Elbe River close to the town of Děčín in the Czech Republic (it temporarily emerged in 2018).

The inscription, which appears to have been engraved in 1616, reads: "If you see me, weep."

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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Toll reduction first in state history?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/tacoma/toll-reduction-believed-first-washington-state-history/281-1c75a8f9-5795-4fdc-81a1-f3f53fff2a09">https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/tacoma/toll-reduction-believed-first-washington-state-history/281-1c75a8f9-5795-4fdc-81a1-f3f53fff2a09</a>
GIST	<p>GIG HARBOR, Wash. — Come October, commuters who use the Tacoma Narrows Bridge will see what's believed to be the <a href="#">first toll reduction</a> in state history.</p> <p>Following the lead of legislators in March, members of the Washington State Transportation Commission Tuesday voted unanimously to reduce tolls on the bridge by at least 75 cents.</p> <p>The reduction goes into effect October 1, 2022.</p> <p>Currently drivers with Good to Go passes pay \$5.25 to cross the eastbound bridge.</p> <p>Those who choose to pay with cash are charged \$6.25, and drivers who pay by mail pay \$7.25.</p>

	<p>“That’s a big deal. It’s expensive. It’s about damn time,” said Bethany Miller, a single mother who lives in Gig Harbor and drives across the bridge, sometimes more than once a day.</p> <p>“Rent is insane, gas is insane,” said Miller. “It’s hard to survive.”</p> <p>If someone crosses the bridge daily, and works five days a week, the savings in a year will be almost \$200. Truck drivers in vehicles with more than two axles will see reductions of more than \$1.</p> <p>In March, state legislators approved the transfer of \$130 million from the state’s general fund to go towards bridge toll relief.</p> <p>Over the summer, Transportation Commission members voted to give drivers of two-axle vehicles 75-cent cuts, while offering larger breaks to truck drivers to pass on savings to residents who don’t use the bridge. “This is the most equitable way to deal treat a reduction,” said Commissioner Jerry Litt.</p> <p>State law requires tolls to pay off the remaining bridge construction costs, which are predicted to be paid off in 2032, said Reema Griffith, Executive Director of the Washington State Transportation Commission.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Downtown Seattle in notable recovery</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/downtown-seattle-seeing-notable-recovery-reemergence-foot-traffic-after-pandemic/Y4LARX4LTZCINGS4TVEWSF2PEE/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/downtown-seattle-seeing-notable-recovery-reemergence-foot-traffic-after-pandemic/Y4LARX4LTZCINGS4TVEWSF2PEE/</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — Downtown Seattle is seeing a notable recovery as foot traffic is starting to return to levels that existed before the pandemic.</p> <p>The Downtown Seattle Association has a <a href="#">recovery dashboard showing data</a> that provides a comparison with the same time period in 2019.</p> <p>According to DSA, 2.9 million visitors came through downtown in July — the highest monthly visitor total since the start of the pandemic. In July 2019, downtown saw more than 3 million visitors.</p> <p>In the week of July 18, there were more than 280,000 daily visitors and more than 434,000 daily pedestrian visits, which includes workers, residents and visitors. “Total foot was at its highest since the pandemic,” data stated.</p> <p>Data also showed that there was more than a 40% increase in worker foot traffic for four consecutive weeks in July. It was the first time since the start of the pandemic that numbers have stayed above that threshold.</p> <p>When Seattle is compared with cities like San Francisco and Los Angeles for workers returning to their downtown offices, Seattle’s numbers are higher. However, peer cities like Portland and Austin showed a higher number of worker foot traffic.</p> <p>The demand for hotel rooms downtown in July reached 94% of 2019 levels. According to DSA, hotel revenue reached \$4.3 million on July 16, making it the third-highest revenue day in the city’s history.</p> <p>To get a clear picture of the metrics, <a href="#">click here as the Downtown Seattle Association has more details</a> on how it came up with the metrics.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 North Seattle homeless camp cleared</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/crews-clear-north-seattle-homeless-encampment-after-6-years-complaints-residents/OXB3CTBZRZCH7HQUNRSOKA4KK4/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/crews-clear-north-seattle-homeless-encampment-after-6-years-complaints-residents/OXB3CTBZRZCH7HQUNRSOKA4KK4/</a>

GIST	<p>SEATTLE — After complaints about trash, rats, crime and rampant drug activity for six years, city of Seattle crews and Seattle police cleared an encampment at North 125th Street and Stone Avenue North on Tuesday.</p> <p>A KIRO 7 crew was there as crews towed away numerous recreational vehicles, as well as abandoned cars that did not run.</p> <p>One tow operator said he loses hundreds of dollars on each abandoned car he has to impound.</p> <p>There were also tons of trash and debris in a spot where city signs warned about illegal dumping.</p> <p>KIRO 7 learned that the city reached out to people who were living in their cars, RVs and tents, to offer shelter.</p> <p>One source close to the situation told KIRO 7 that the majority of people did not accept the offers for help and just moved to another location.</p> <p>A KIRO 7 crew also got a chance to speak to a neighbor, as well as a friend of those who were swept from the area.</p> <p>“What I’ve been seeing is, ah, criminal enterprise that lives down here, people that are not interested in following any rules, supporters that are supporting them — that they should be allowed to live here, and yet the neighborhood is suffering. Believe me,” said Melinda Jackson. “We pay taxes but we haven’t been heard for six years. How you like to live near this?”</p> <p>“They say oh, well it’s a mess, or this (and) that oh. Well, if you’re concerned about that, maybe don’t make everybody leave, so it’s on your front porch,” said Lilly, a friend of a displaced person.</p> <p>The sweep is the latest where encampments have been cleared around Seattle this week, including the removal of a line of tents along the Interurban Trail in North Seattle.</p> <p>Mayor Bruce Harrell has made a commitment to cleaning up the city with the fast deployment of shelter and outreach teams, giving unsheltered people opportunities to take advantage of the services the city has offered.</p> <p>More than a dozen sweeps have occurred in the city within the last month.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Tacoma plans more homeless camp sweeps</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/local/tacoma-working-to-clear-13th-homeless-camp-this-year-14th-in-the-coming-weeks">https://komonews.com/news/local/tacoma-working-to-clear-13th-homeless-camp-this-year-14th-in-the-coming-weeks</a>
GIST	<p>TACOMA, Wash. — Tacoma city crews on Tuesday begun clearing another homeless encampment, but several RVs and vehicles remained along with piles of trash and debris after the work began.</p> <p>Officials on Tuesday said they will continue trying to connect those who are still living at the site on Center Street between Steele and Hosmer streets with housing and services.</p> <p>A business in the area that did not want to talk on camera for safety reasons said its workers claim they’ve been threatened by campers before and have seen fires in the area and car break-ins and are worried about remaining campers.</p> <p>Officials said they contacted 11 people at the site on Tuesday, and nine of them accepted the city's offers for services.</p> <p>The municipal workers also removed more than 12,000 pounds of people’s belongings, officials said.</p>

The city on Tuesday said it's typical for about half of campers to accept offers of outreach services, and then they connect an estimated 20-percent of them.

Of course, they're working to increase those numbers.

As KOMO News has reported, city records show there's shelter space available but some still refuse to leave.

That includes one man who on Monday said he's lived at the site for two weeks.

"I am going to stand right here until they put me in prison, because that's what it's going to take," said the camper, who declined to provide his name.

"That's why we're continuing to work on diversifying our shelter model and providers so we can actually offer solutions for individuals that are looking for shelter and to meet that need that people have," said Caleb Carbone, manager of the city's Homeless Strategy and Systems Services.

The city said it has a couple projects in the pipeline that combined will house about 80 people, though one micro-shelter in Hilltop is behind schedule because of permitting and some building finishes, officials said.

KOMO News asked how the city can be sure there's enough shelter when projects are delayed.

"We are always considering what we're looking at in terms of shelter capacity when we are doing removals," Carbone said. "They've been housing through diff ways through like hotels and providing services."

The city says it also continues looking at other shelter models and seeing where they can expand housing.

The housing projects in the pipeline includes a micro-shelter in the Hill op area for just over 30 people at a time.

Then next week, the city will break ground at the 35th Avenue and Pacific Street site, which will have space for about 50 people.

The location will have spaces for people to bring their own tent, or the shelter will provide one for them.

And also in the planning stages is the city is in talks with providers about providing a safe parking site for RVs and cars.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Impact of pandemic on Spokane businesses</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.krem.com/article/money/economy/boomtown-inland-northwest/covid-spokane-local-small-business/293-4628dd37-e490-45c5-9a6a-78c95e431279">https://www.krem.com/article/money/economy/boomtown-inland-northwest/covid-spokane-local-small-business/293-4628dd37-e490-45c5-9a6a-78c95e431279</a>
GIST	<p>SPOKANE, Wash. — Spokane had business closure after business closure during the COVID-19 pandemic, with notable staple the <a href="#">White Elephant</a> closing its doors in 2020.</p> <p>Diving deep into the numbers, however, there's more to the story of the pandemic closures in 2020-2021.</p> <p>Sherri Davies owns <a href="#">Heavenly Teas</a>, which has been open for six years. The business was doing well at the beginning of 2020.</p>

“We were having some of our busiest months ever and then the pandemic hit. I didn't know what I was going to do. I really had no savings. It was all in that business.” Davies said.

Like thousands of other businesses, Davies started applying for COVID-19 relief grants and loans to get by. But application after application came up short until a few local grants finally came through.

“We applied for everything we could. I mean, my employees weren't going to get paychecks. Without those grants, we wouldn't even be here. They gave us just enough to keep us going and help us survive.”

Davies was not alone in that relief.

According to data retrieved from the [Washington Department of Revenue](#) (DOR), about 6,700 businesses between 2018-2019 closed in those years.

However, compared to how many businesses closed in 2020 and 2021, only 3,300 businesses closed each year. Despite the rhetoric of how hard the pandemic was on local businesses, half the number of businesses closed during the pandemic compared to an average year.

“Because we made sure to provide kind of the government's sport, whether it was the payroll protection program, that PPP program, there was a bunch of tax credits given for employers for keeping employees on the books,” said Ryan Herzog, an economics professor at Gonzaga.

Herzog claims that a combination of government funding and encouragement for businesses to stay open contributed to the lower-than-average business closures in 2020-2021.

DOR data also shows how many businesses opened during the pandemic, and suggest that the pandemic had no effect on the number of businesses opening between 2020-2021.

Ryan Herzog said that could be because people used stimulus money to open businesses, or people realized they didn't enjoy the typical 9-5 job.

With talks of a true recession on the horizon, Herzog said people likely won't see that stimulus support from the government again.

“Now, as we're fighting inflation, the last thing you want to do is if you're worried about inflation has put more money into the system, right?” Herzog said.

“You just hang on by your fingernails to try and make it through especially with inflation going up and prices of food have doubled,” Davies said.

It's yet another challenge local business owners have to overcome.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Nicaragua silences last outspoken critics</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/23/world/americas/nicaragua-catholic-church-daniel-ortega.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/23/world/americas/nicaragua-catholic-church-daniel-ortega.html</a>
GIST	<p>MATAGALPA, Nicaragua — He was the most prominent voice of protest in Nicaragua, using his pulpit to denounce the government’s detention of opponents and suppression of civic rights. Then, last week, the government came for him.</p> <p>Bishop Rolando Álvarez was arrested after the police raided his residence and put him under house arrest and eight of his companions in jail.</p> <p>The shocking arrest of Bishop Álvarez on Friday, the most senior clergyman to be detained in Latin America for political views in decades, was the latest and most aggressive move by Nicaragua’s president,</p>



Daniel Ortega, against the Roman Catholic Church. Until now, it was the only institution that had escaped his control after 15 years of uninterrupted rule.

But as Mr. Ortega, 76, last year began to [purge the few remaining dissidents](#) in politics, civil society, news media, academia, business and culture, the Catholic churches in this deeply religious Central American nation assumed an increasingly pivotal role. More than sources of spiritual solace, they became the only places in the country where citizens could speak their minds and listen to speakers who were not appointed by the state.

Mr. Ortega's already authoritarian rule tipped into systematic repression last year, when it became clear that he lacked a popular mandate to win another term in the general elections held in November. To retain power, he turned the country into a one-party state, jailing all opposition presidential candidates and then moving to silence all other dissident voices.

Now, with the last influential clergyman silenced, Nicaragua has reached a milestone, according to human rights activists, former officials and priests: cementing its position as a totalitarian state.

"They are liquidating the last important social actor in Nicaragua," said Vilma Núñez, a Nicaraguan human rights activist and one of the few government critics remaining in the country. "It's a checkmate against democracy."

Interviews with priests, church workers and parishioners across Nicaragua show the arrest of Bishop Álvarez was just one of several attacks in the government's monthslong campaign to dismantle the church's reach in the country.

The police have arrested seven other priests since June on charges ranging from child abuse to [disturbing the public order](#). None have been convicted. Another provincial priest, Uriel Vallejos, went into hiding after the police raided his parish's radio station and [surrounded his residence](#) for several days early this month.

The radio station managed by Father Vallejos was among about 10 Catholic television and radio channels that were [shut down by the government](#) this year, depriving Nicaragua of the last independent news outlets based inside the country.

In July, the government [outlawed the missionary order](#) founded by Mother Teresa and expelled the order's 18 nuns from the country without explanation. Their exile followed the [expulsion in March of the Vatican's envoy to Nicaragua](#), Archbishop Waldemar Stanislaw Sommertag.

The wave of arrests and expulsions led Pope Francis to make a rare reference on Sunday to repression in Nicaragua.

"I would like to express my conviction and my hope that through an open and sincere dialogue the basis for a respectful and peaceful coexistence might still be found," he said after a public prayer at the Vatican.

The clergymen and missionaries who have remained in the country have been subjected to a campaign of fear. The authorities in the past month have banned the church from [conducting religious processions in the streets](#), prevented some priests from officiating Mass, stationed police patrols outside clergymen's homes and called priests in for questioning.

Several priests told The New York Times that undercover security agents and pro-government paramilitaries had been monitoring their Mass services and taking photos of attendees.

"There's a constant, threatening presence there," said Miguel Mántica, a Catholic parish priest in Nicaragua's capital, Managua, referring to his church services.

The crackdown has had a chilling effect in a country where the government has jailed nearly 200 politicians, businessmen, student leaders, social activists and journalists over the past year.

The once-crowded church pews have emptied out as parishioners have remained at home out of fear of being labeled dissidents by government agents. The outspoken priests have grown silent.

Nicaragua's most senior clergyman, Cardinal Leopoldo Brenes, and the church's top body in the country, the Episcopal Conference of Nicaragua, did not respond to requests for comment.

The demoralization was on display this month during the celebration of Our Lady of Fátima, a major Catholic holiday. Once an exuberant procession of thousands, the commemoration was replaced by a somber walk of about 400 clergymen and parishioners around the grounds of the capital's cathedral, after the government banned the church from using the streets.

Those present said the repression had not dented the faith of the Nicaraguan people, but acknowledged that the fear had kept many from joining the celebration.

"We know that this attack against the church is not just against Catholics, but against all the voices that speak up in solidarity with the people," said Inés Pérez, a 60-year-old Catholic who came to celebrate Our Lady of Fátima from the nearby city of Masaya. "Even from confinement we can express ourselves, demonstrate our faith. They won't bend us."

The repression against the church has had an even stronger effect in Nicaragua's remote rural areas, where Mass has, in many cases, become the last social forum available to local communities.

"The church is the only one left who can change something in the country," said Carlos Bolaños, a farmer in the northern town of Waslala, pointing to the church's global reach and its role in toppling Communism in Eastern Europe.

Nearly nine out of 10 Nicaraguans identify as Christian, according to the latest available Latinobarómetro poll. Although Catholicism in Nicaragua, like elsewhere in the region, has been steadily losing ground to Evangelical churches, it remains the largest denomination in the country, the poll shows.

Mr. Bolaños said that for the past seven years he had walked with a local priest to help officiate an informal Mass on weekends in remote communities lacking a church. He said that on arriving in a hamlet, the conversation usually immediately turns to politics.

"All the institutions are already controlled by the government," he said. "The people want to know what's really happening in the country."

The scale of religious repression in Nicaragua has brought back memories of the worst years of the Central American civil wars of the 1980s, when dozens of priests and nuns in nearby El Salvador and Guatemala were murdered by both sides for speaking out against dictatorships.

In Nicaragua, the systematic dismantling of Catholic institutions signifies the end of Mr. Ortega's long-running efforts to make clergy instruments of the Socialist movement he has come to embody, the Sandinistas.

During the armed struggle against the right-wing dictator Anastasio Somoza in the 1970s, Sandinista guerrillas received unlikely support from a progressive group of Catholic priests who advocated for the poor and spoke out against oppression.

After taking power in 1979, the Sandinistas purged the reactionary clergymen allied with Mr. Somoza, but tried channeling the religious devotion of the Nicaraguan people toward revolutionary goals, said Humberto Belli, a former senior Sandinista official who has broken with Mr. Ortega.

	<p>“The government promoted the idea that being a true Christian meant being a revolutionary,” he said.</p> <p>The alliance with sectors of the church largely ended in 2018, when a wave of national protests led to the death of about 300 protesters at the hands of security forces and paramilitaries. Many priests opened their churches to protesters seeking refuge and denounced the violence in their sermons.</p> <p>The demonstrations showed the church’s power in legitimizing social protests, said Mr. Belli.</p> <p>Now, no longer able to co-opt church leaders, Mr. Ortega appears to have decided to eradicate independent Christian practice to complete his total control of the nation, he said.</p> <p>“Christianity means subordination to a being outside the revolution,” said Mr. Belli. “This government can’t tolerate this.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Race, class and traffic deaths</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/23/briefing/traffic-deaths-class-race-covid.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/23/briefing/traffic-deaths-class-race-covid.html</a>
GIST	<p>Vehicle crashes seem as if they might be an equal-opportunity public health problem. Americans in every demographic group drive, after all. If anything, poor families tend to rely more on public transportation and less on car travel.</p> <p>Yet vehicle deaths turn out to be highly unequal. Lower-income people are much more likely to die in crashes, academic research shows. The racial gaps are also huge — even bigger on a percentage basis than the racial gaps on cancer, according to the C.D.C.</p> <p>The unequal toll from crashes is particularly notable now because the U.S. is experiencing <a href="#">an alarming increase in vehicle deaths</a>. Pete Buttigieg, the transportation secretary, recently called it “a national crisis of fatalities and serious injuries on our roadways.” And the toll is falling most heavily on lower-income Americans and Black Americans.</p> <p>The reasons for the increase remain somewhat mysterious, experts say. But the consequences are clear. More than 115 Americans have been dying on the roads on average every day this year.</p> <p>Today’s newsletter will explore the likely explanations for the increase, as well as its unequal impact and the potential solutions.</p> <p><b>A decline, reversed</b></p> <p>Not so long ago, the trend in car crashes was a good-news story. The death rate began to fall in the early 1970s, thanks in large part to the consumer movement started by Ralph Nader. Cars became safer. States passed seatbelt laws. Drunken driving became less common. The declines continued into the early 2010s, as airbags became standard and vehicles began to include technology to prevent crashes.</p> <p>But the situation changed around 2015, with the death rate mostly rising over the next several years. One reason seems to be <a href="#">distracted driving</a>. By 2015, two-thirds of U.S. adults owned a smartphone, up from almost none in 2006.</p> <p>The U.S. has also been less aggressive about cracking down on speeding than Britain and some other parts of Europe, and vehicles here tend to be larger. “The engorgement of the American vehicle,” as Gregory Shill of the University of Iowa has called it, can kill pedestrians and people in smaller vehicles. These patterns help explain why death rates <a href="#">have fallen substantially more</a> in other countries than in the U.S. during recent decades.</p> <p>As alarming as these trends were, the biggest increases have taken place more recently — since the pandemic. In the spring of 2020, as Covid was transforming daily life, <a href="#">vehicle crashes surged</a>. By the start</p>

of this year, the death rate had jumped about 20 percent from prepandemic levels. It has been the sharpest increase since the 1940s.

How did Covid lead to more crashes?

At first, researchers thought that emptier roads might be the main answer. Open roads can encourage speeding, and speeding can be fatal. But even as traffic returned to near-normal levels last year, traffic deaths remained high. That combination weakens the empty-road theory, as Robert Schneider, an urban-planning expert at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, said.

The most plausible remaining theories tend to involve the mental health problems caused by Covid's isolation and disruption. Alcohol and drug abuse have increased. Impulsive behavior, like running red lights and failing to wear seatbelts, also seems to have risen (as my colleague Simon Romero has reported). Many Americans have felt frustrated or unhappy, and it seems to have affected their driving.

"They're a little bit less regulated — they might not be considering consequences," Kira Mauseth, a clinical psychologist at Seattle University, has said. Frank Farley, a psychologist at Temple University, put it this way to The Los Angeles Times: "You've been cooped up, locked down and have restrictions you chafe at."

Ken Kolosh, who oversees data analysis at the National Safety Council, a nonprofit group, told me that researchers would need years to tease out all the causes. Confusingly, vehicle deaths did not surge in most other countries during the pandemic, suggesting that stress was a particularly American problem. "The world really felt upside down," Kolosh said.

One encouraging data point that's consistent with this theory: The most recent data shows that vehicle deaths declined modestly this spring, as Covid restrictions continued to recede.

### **An unequal pandemic ...**

Still, the surge in crashes has become one more way that the pandemic has hurt lower-income Americans and people of color the most — as did [the early wave of Covid deaths](#) and [the consequences of closed schools](#).

As I mentioned above, vehicle fatalities have long been unequal. Poorer people are more likely to drive older cars, which can lack safety features. Low-income neighborhoods are also much more likely to have high-speed roads running through them. "We have systematically put these arterial roadways in areas where people had less political power to fight back," Rebecca Sanders, the founder of Safe Streets Research & Consulting, said.

The pandemic probably exacerbated the gaps because many professionals have begun working from home, while many blue-collar Americans kept driving, biking or walking to work. Some lower-income workers also drive as part of their jobs.

### **... and some solutions**

Even if the full explanation of the surge in crashes is murky, many experts believe that the most promising solutions remain clear.

"Making streets safer doesn't require designing new solutions in laboratories," John Rennie Short, of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, [has written](#). Jeffrey Michael, another expert, told The Washington Post, "This is an issue for which answers are known."

Those answers include: stricter enforcement of speed limits, seatbelt mandates and drunken-driving laws; better designed roads, especially in poorer neighborhoods; more public transit; and further spread of safety features like automated braking.

	Continuing to leave behind the disruptions of Covid — and the loneliness and stress they have caused — seems likely to help, too.
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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Pot, hallucinogens use surge young adults</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/23/use-marijuana-hallucinogens-surg-ing-among-young-ad/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/23/use-marijuana-hallucinogens-surg-ing-among-young-ad/</a>
GIST	<p>Adults younger than 30 are using marijuana and hallucinogenic drugs at the highest rates since government scientists began tracking trends in the late 1980s, according to a National Institutes of Health survey.</p> <p>Results from <a href="#">NIH</a>'s Monitoring the Future survey for 2021 found the share of adults ages 19 to 30 reporting marijuana use in the past year, month or day reached the highest levels recorded since 1988.</p> <p>Reported past-year marijuana use hit 43% in 2021, a huge bump from 34% five years prior and 29% a decade ago, in 2011.</p> <p>Past-month use of marijuana hit 29% among young adults in 2021, compared to 21% in 2016, while 11% of young adults reported daily use in 2021 compared to 8% in 2016.</p> <p><a href="#">NIH</a> said use of hallucinogens such as LSD, MDMA, peyote, "shrooms" or psilocybin was relatively flat until 2020 but then it started to rise dramatically. The survey found 8% of young adults reported use of this class of drugs at some point in 2021, up from 5% in 2016 and 3% in 2011.</p> <p>However, use of MDMA ("Molly" or "ecstasy") bucked the trend. Use dropped to 3% in 2021 compared to 5% in 2016 and 2020.</p> <p>The trends coincide with shifting attitudes toward both classes of drugs.</p> <p>States are taking an increasingly hands-off approach to marijuana, even setting up state programs to sell and regulate the drug.</p> <p>Policymakers say cracking down on the drug results in mass incarceration and social upheaval, often burdening minorities, and it makes little sense to treat the drug more stringently than alcohol.</p> <p>Attitudes about hallucinogens, meanwhile, have shifted from associations with hippies and cultural movements of the 1960s to a closer look at potential therapeutics benefits to fight drug addiction, post-traumatic stress disorder or depression.</p> <p>People are unlikely to die of an overdose on LSD, unlike drugs like heroin and fentanyl.</p> <p>Still, NIH said the trends deserve scrutiny.</p> <p>"We need to know more about how young adults are using drugs like marijuana and hallucinogens, and the health effects that result from consuming different potencies and forms of these substances," said Dr. Nora Volkow, director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse. "Young adults are in a critical life stage and honing their ability to make informed choices. Understanding how substance use can impact the formative choices in young adulthood is critical to help position the new generations for success."</p> <p>The NIH survey also found nicotine vaping continued its rise, part of a long trend, in 2021 despite leveling off a bit in 2020.</p> <p>Sixteen percent of young adults reported vaping last year compared to 6% in 2017, when NIH began monitoring it.</p>

	<p>Alcohol remains the most-used substance among young adults in the survey.</p> <p>Binge-drinking — defined as having five or more drinks in a row at some point in the past two weeks — returned to pre-pandemic levels in 2021 (32% in 2021, 28% in 2020 and 32% in 2019).</p> <p>However, general monthly or daily use of alcohol was on the wane.</p> <p>NIH said 66% of young adults reported alcohol during the past 30 days in the survey, a notable drop from 70% in 2016 and 69% in 2011.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>08/23 Puyallup mobile home park closing protest</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/community/puyallup-herald/ph-news/article264781264.html">https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/community/puyallup-herald/ph-news/article264781264.html</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>Armando Aragon and others stood Tuesday evening near the intersection of Elm Place and South Meridian in downtown Puyallup. They were holding up cardboard posters across from City Hall.</p> <p>Aragon's sign read: "Igualdad de vivienda ahora!!!" (Fair housing now). Another person's sign read: "Save Meridian Estates."</p> <p>About 50 people gathered at Pioneer Park around 5:30 p.m. Tuesday. Housing activists and Meridian Mobile Estates residents rallied to raise awareness about what's happening at the mobile home park at 202 27th Ave. SE. Then many spoke at the Puyallup City Council meeting.</p> <p>Meridian Estates residents must leave the mobile home park by October. Timberlane Partners purchased the property last year and plans to build apartments there, The News Tribune reported. Many residents own their mobile homes, but not the land those homes sit on. The mobile home park started with 42 families — as of Aug. 1, 31 families still living there.</p> <p>"This is really unfair for everyone," resident Saraim Nieto said Tuesday evening.</p> <p>Home in Tacoma for All, a coalition advocating for affordable and sustainable housing, is the group that planned the rally. Over 430 people have signed the group's online petition, which asks that the development be stopped or that the residents receive the full value of their homes.</p> <p>"Our demand is that tenants receive the full value of homes in the park, but at the very least, we want the city and developers to provide more relief," volunteer Ann Dorn wrote in an email Aug. 15.</p> <p>The city, state and developer have each offered financial assistance to residents. Some of them say it isn't enough, given what they paid for their homes and what they've invested to renovate them. Some families are moving their homes, but finding spaces in the city has been challenging and in many cases the age of the home or renovations make it impossible.</p> <p>When asked what will happen if residents do not move by October, a city spokesperson said recently that demolition and evictions will begin, and that it will be the property owner's call on how they will proceed with that.</p> <p>"I feel it's unfair to close the park because we have children, elderly, disabled and retired people," Nieto said during an April 5 City Council meeting. "We have been dealing with so much ... emotional distress thinking about where we are going to live after we are kicked out."</p> <p>Meridian Estates residents and those supporting them at the rally took turns addressing the City Council across the street from the protest during the public comment period of the 6:30 p.m. meeting Tuesday.</p> <p>Some at the rally planned to speak during the public comment period of the Puyallup City Council meeting 6:30 p.m. Tuesday across the street.</p>

Resident Martin Martinez and his family stood in front of the podium with a sign that read: “Save Meridian Mobile Estates!!!” He said the money the city and developer offered, \$10,000 altogether, is not enough to find a home.

“These aren’t my neighbors. These are my family,” Martinez said.

Resident Elicia Von Feldt said she and her family put their “whole hearts and souls” into their mobile home. She said she expects to see laws in the future that would help protect residents in similar situations.

“The city has given us a \$5,000 grant, which I’m grateful for, but it is not enough. We cannot use that to get into any kind of housing in this county,” Von Feldt said.

Resident Douglas Hudson said he purchased materials from the nearby Home Depot and Lowe’s to fix his home with Von Feldt, renovating it himself. He said he’s been investing in the Puyallup community, spending his money at businesses in the city, for about five and a half years.

“You don’t have the authority to put us on the street. You work for me. I’m telling you to do something about it. Help us out. Pay attention,” Hudson said.

Aragon, another resident, spoke through interpreters.. Aragon said council members knew that the residents “were screwed” from the beginning, and that they should know what to do.

“Please think about that. That’s what he wanted you guys to know,” an attendee who helped interpret said.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Oregon defies order to halt water to farmers</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/oregon-officials-defy-order-to-halt-water-deliveries-to-farmers/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/oregon-officials-defy-order-to-halt-water-deliveries-to-farmers/</a>
GIST	<p>KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. (AP) — The Klamath Irrigation District in Southern Oregon plans to defy a U.S. government order issued last week for a halt to water deliveries to farmers in the drought-stricken basin.</p> <p>The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation manages the Klamath Project, which includes Klamath Irrigation District and serves 266 square miles (689 square kilometers) of farmland around the Oregon-California border. A limited allocation of water was allowed for irrigators from Upper Klamath Lake this year because of extreme drought.</p> <p>The bureau has said the project is now out of water and ordered a shutdown last week, but irrigation district directors met Monday and authorized the district’s manager, Gene Souza, to continue operations, the Capital Press reported.</p> <p>The district operates a canal that provides water to nine irrigation districts encompassing about 191 square miles (495 square kilometers).</p> <p>Souza said in a letter to Alan Heck, acting area manager for the U.S. agency, that it has not provided a legal basis for shutting down the project and that doing so would deny farmers of the water they have legal rights to receive.</p> <p>“I am not doing my duty if I just comply, because I do not have a legal justification to deny the people I serve their property,” Souza told the Capital Press.</p> <p>A spokesperson for the Bureau of Reclamation could not immediately be reached for comment, the Capital Press reported.</p> <p>The agency has said it would take an adaptive approach to project operations in 2022.</p>



Under the Endangered Species Act, the agency must uphold protections for several species of fish, including shortnose and Lost River suckerfish in Upper Klamath Lake and coho salmon in the lower Klamath River.

The federal bureau initially allocated 15% of full demand for irrigators starting on April 15. Officials said that if inflows to Upper Klamath Lake exceeded expectations, they would set aside 50% of the additional water for irrigators.

The Klamath Falls area experienced slightly above-average precipitation in May and June. As of Aug. 1, the project's water supply had increased while maintaining a minimum lake elevation for suckers to access critical habitat.

Brad Kirby, manager of the Tulelake Irrigation District in Tulelake, California, said shutting off water now could mean disaster for some farmers.

"We are looking at severely reduced production," Kirby said about crops including alfalfa. "But for row crops like potatoes and onions, there is essentially no production unless you have water through the end of the irrigation season."

The Endangered Species Act requires the Bureau of Reclamation to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service to establish guidelines for protecting endangered fish. The results form the basis for how much water fish and irrigators receive annually.

A current guideline for the suckers establishes an "absolute minimum" water elevation of 4,138 feet (1,261 meters) above sea level in Upper Klamath Lake for fish to access critical habitat and hide from predators.

The Klamath Tribes sued the federal government in May, claiming any water diverted from Upper Klamath Lake for irrigation in 2022 threatens the survival of suckers during the drought.

The fish, known as C'waam and Koptu, are central to the tribes' history and culture.

Don Gentry, Klamath Tribes chairman, said earlier this summer that agriculture should be based on what's sustainable, noting "there's too many people after too little water."

In response to the Aug. 19 shutdown, other irrigation districts are scrambling to help save as many crops as possible.

Kirby, with the Tulelake Irrigation District, said irrigators are being forced to pump groundwater from the district's wells to keep crops alive through harvest.

"We're having to rethink our entire system," Kirby said.

Scott White, manager of the Klamath Drainage District, said the Bureau of Reclamation proposed a plan to "borrow" additional water for farmers from the PacifiCorp electrical power company that manages hydroelectric dams on the Klamath River. But board members rejected the proposal after learning the water would be repaid out of the district's winter agricultural diversions.

"It's been a different year, for sure, in terms of operating and cooperating with the bureau," White said. "These policy decisions that are contrary to precedent and contrary to history, they do us no benefits in terms of managing our water wisely."

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HEADLINE	08/23 Half WA eligible free, discount hospital care
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SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/half-of-wa-residents-now-eligible-for-free-or-discounted-hospital-care-heres-what-to-know/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/half-of-wa-residents-now-eligible-for-free-or-discounted-hospital-care-heres-what-to-know/</a>
GIST	<p>Millions of Washingtonians recently became eligible for free or discounted hospital care after an <a href="#">update to a state law</a> went into effect last month, a significant step toward eliminating residents' costly medical debts.</p> <p>The original law, known as “charity care,” was passed in 1989 and requires hospitals to make financial assistance available for low-income patients to help with their out-of-pocket medical costs. Up until this year, however, the eligibility requirements were much more narrow, state Attorney General Bob Ferguson said in an interview.</p> <p>“Medical debt is unfortunately a key driver for financial insecurity for many, many Washingtonians,” Ferguson said. “It became clear that our existing charity care laws were far too limited and simply did not include folks who, in my view, most certainly would be deserving of financial support on this type of debt.”</p> <p>Under the former version of the law, Washingtonians within 200% of the federal poverty level were eligible for financial assistance, which is up to about \$27,200 in annual income for a one-person household. For a four-person family, the limit was \$55,500 in annual income.</p> <p>As of July 1, all Washingtonians within 300% of the federal poverty level now qualify for charity care for their full out-of-pocket hospital bill, as long as care is considered “medically necessary.” Those within 400% of the federal poverty level are eligible for discounted care, which is up to about \$54,360 for a one-person home or \$111,000 for a family of four.</p> <p>About 4 million people fall into those income groups in Washington, roughly half the state’s population.</p> <p>In addition, the new law establishes two tiers of financial assistance — one for large health care systems with three or more hospitals (<a href="#">Tier 1</a>, which account for about 80% of the state’s hospital beds) and another for smaller, independent hospitals (<a href="#">Tier 2</a>).</p> <p>At Tier 1 hospitals, about 3 million residents will have access to free hospital care, while another million will have access to discounted care. Tier 2 hospitals, which are often public hospital districts in rural counties, offer slightly smaller discounts for residents and aren’t required to offer discounts to those between 300% and 400% of the poverty level.</p> <p>The classifications acknowledge that “not all hospitals are situated identically with their resources,” Ferguson said.</p> <p>Here’s what else to know about the change.</p> <p><b>Do I qualify for charity care if I have health insurance?</b></p> <p>Yes. Charity care covers your out-of-pocket costs (like deductibles and copays) for all Washingtonians, whether they have public or private medical insurance, or are uninsured, said assistant attorney Audrey Udashen, who worked closely on the charity care legislation this year.</p> <p>If you’re on Medicaid or Medicare or receive Social Security benefits, charity care will not impact your eligibility for those programs. Medicaid and Medicare will still cover their share, and charity care will apply to what remains.</p> <p><b>Who pays for charity care procedures? Are hospitals reimbursed by the state?</b></p> <p>Hospitals are not reimbursed for charity care. It’s an “obligation” of the hospitals and “comes out of the tradition of hospitals being these nonprofit entities that have large tax exemptions,” Udashen said.</p> <p>“It’s more about the hospital providing this free care in exchange for their nonprofit status,” she said.</p>

**Does charity care only apply to hospital care, or does it also cover clinic visits?**

Charity care applies to hospital care, but many clinics are owned and operated by hospital systems and often are also covered by their charity care policy. Still, Udashen recommended always asking your hospital to be sure.

**Does it cover visits to the emergency room or outpatient procedures that are done at hospitals?**

Charity care covers emergency room visits and any other scan, test or procedure done at a hospital. It might not cover bills from physicians or other providers not employed by a hospital.

**Does charity care apply retroactively to past hospital bills?**

Residents can apply for charity care for past bills. One exception, Udashen said, is if a collection agency has filed a lawsuit against a patient who hasn't yet paid their hospital bill, leading to a court judgment against the patient. That situation is rare, though, she said.

**Can any of my assets (if I own a home or have retirement accounts) disqualify me?**

While there are some extremes, hospitals cannot consider most assets when assessing charity care eligibility, Ferguson said. Health systems can only consider assets if the patient's income level is at 200% of the federal poverty guidelines or higher.

For those above 200% of the federal poverty rate, hospitals could consider some assets, but there are several exceptions — including equity in a primary residence, retirement plans, life insurance policies, the first \$5,000 of money in a bank account and others.

"Asset consideration can't be unreasonable or a barrier to consumers to actually getting charity care," Udashen said. "It shouldn't be a burdensome process."

**Hospitals are already struggling with workforce shortages and high supply because of inflation. Will expanded eligibility to charity care increase the financial burden on them?**

Oregon passed a similar update to its charity care law in 2019 and, according to Ferguson, "What we heard back was all good."

"No hospitals have closed down. No, there's not some burden financially on hospitals that's causing a financial crisis for any of them," he said. "What we heard back is a system that works, and most importantly, is helping many Oregonians."

Still, the Washington State Hospital Association has some concerns about smaller rural hospitals battling high costs and patient load, in addition to ongoing strains from the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We don't know how large these impacts will be, but ... they could be fairly large," said Zosia Stanley, vice president and associate general counsel of the Washington State Hospital Association.

**How will the state make sure hospitals are complying with this law?**

Charity care can be a challenging area to regulate, Ferguson said. Because many Washingtonians aren't aware of their right to charity care, they often don't know when a hospital is violating related laws.

Still, patient complaints have led to at least three major lawsuits against hospital systems that weren't complying, including [one filed this year](#) against Providence Health & Services where the system allegedly sent more than 54,000 patient accounts, totaling \$70 million, to a debt collection agency even though it knew the patients were eligible for financial assistance. Providence has denied the allegations. Hospitals are legally required to inform patients of their eligibility for charity care.

"Making sure hospitals are following Washington's charity care laws is extremely important to me," Ferguson said. "And the fact that we've had to file multiple lawsuits against large, sophisticated systems indicates we're not where we need to be."

	For more information about the new charity care law and how you can apply for coverage, visit the <a href="#">state attorney general's website</a> or the <a href="#">Washington State Hospital Association's website</a> .
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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Subvariants BA.4.6, BA.2.75: concern?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/nation/omicron-subvariants-ba-4-6-and-ba-2-75-are-here-how-concerned-should-u-s-be/">https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/nation/omicron-subvariants-ba-4-6-and-ba-2-75-are-here-how-concerned-should-u-s-be/</a>
GIST	<p>LOS ANGELES — As the latest coronavirus wave fueled by the super-infectious omicron subvariant BA.5 continues to recede, health officials are turning a wary eye to what might come next.</p> <p>Experts in the federal government and in California are closely tracking two newer subvariants, BA.4.6 and BA.2.75 — themselves members of the omicron family. It isn't clear whether they will eventually spread to worrisome extents in the state, but there's reason to pay attention as they've caused concern elsewhere in the world.</p> <p>The most pressing question is whether either can outcompete BA.5, which essentially elbowed out all other coronavirus strains during its stunning rise to dominance this summer. If they can, that could potentially point to another spin in an all-too-familiar cycle, where the emergence of an even-more-infectious strain threatens to trigger a fresh rise in cases.</p> <p>"The evolutionary pressure on the virus is to find a way around the immunity wall that we have built up," Dr. Ashish Jha, the White House COVID-19 response coordinator, said this week in a forum with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.</p> <p>At this point, BA.5 is far and away the most common version of the coronavirus circulating in California and nationwide. It was estimated to constitute 88% of coronavirus cases nationwide for the week that ended Aug. 13, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.</p> <p>However, the national proportion of infections attributed to BA.4.6 has inched upward. That subvariant was estimated to constitute 5.6% of cases over the week ending Aug. 13, up from 5% the week before. More recent figures peg those subvariants' estimated respective shares of cases at 89% and 6.3%, CDC data show.</p> <p>BA.4.6 isn't a major player in the federally defined region that includes California, Arizona, Nevada, Hawaii and territories in the Pacific Ocean. In that region, BA.4.6 made up an estimated 2.2% of cases over the week ending Aug. 13. However, it constituted an estimated 14.2% of weekly cases in a central region of the country that includes Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the BA.2.75 subvariant has attracted attention for becoming dominant in India and outcompeting BA.5 there, according to a tweet from Dr. Eric Topol, director of the Scripps Research Translational Institute in La Jolla.</p> <p>"We're now seeing signs it can also compete with BA.4.6 in Australia," Topol wrote. "Just the fact that variants can outcompete BA.5 is of concern."</p> <p>And a preprint study from scientists in China suggested that BA.2.75 "may prevail" following the current BA.5 wave.</p> <p>What this means for the U.S. is not clear.</p> <p>There have been plenty of variants that have eventually fizzled out. And, as Topol wrote, the trajectory of a variant like BA.2.75 "may vary considerably between countries."</p>

	<p>In Los Angeles County, there is little information to suggest either of these variants is growing dramatically. According to the most recent data, BA.4.6 constitutes just 1.5% of cases in L.A. County, a rate that remains relatively the same compared to the prior week.</p> <p>There have been only three specimens of BA.2.75 identified cumulatively over a six-week period, “indicating no increased circulation of this sublineage in L.A. County,” said Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer.</p> <p>But the reports from elsewhere regarding subvariants outcompeting BA.5 is worrisome, Ferrer said.</p> <p>For now, though, L.A. County and California as a whole are continuing to experience a pandemic reprieve — with sustained declines both in newly reported infections and the numbers of hospitalized coronavirus-positive patients.</p> <p>“Given the significant decline in cases these past two weeks, and the absence of increased circulation of a new strain of the virus, we are optimistic that hospitalizations will continue to decline as well in L.A. County over the next two to three weeks,” Ferrer said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Sanctions cut not crush Russia economy</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.msn.com/en-us/money/markets/western-sanctions-are-wounding-but-not-yet-crushing-russia-e2-80-99s-economy/ar-AA10YBr3">https://www.msn.com/en-us/money/markets/western-sanctions-are-wounding-but-not-yet-crushing-russia-e2-80-99s-economy/ar-AA10YBr3</a>
GIST	<p>Soon after the Western world launched a broad package of sanctions against Russia for its invasion of Ukraine, President Biden argued that the measures were already causing Russia’s economy to “crater” and “reel.”</p> <p>Six months later, the picture appears more mixed.</p> <p>While most economists agree that Russia is suffering real damage that will mount over time, the economy — at least on the surface — does not yet appear to be collapsing. The ruble’s initial nosedive in value quickly reversed after the state limited currency transactions and after Russia’s imports plummeted — an economic picture that can hardly be described as healthy, but one that calmed public fears about a currency crisis. Unemployment hasn’t noticeably surged, and Russia continues to earn the equivalent of billions of dollars every month from oil and gas exports.</p> <p>In Moscow and St. Petersburg, restaurants and bars remain busy and grocery stores are stocked, even if prices have jumped and some imported goods, such as whiskey, are harder to find. The International Monetary Fund <a href="#">predicts</a> Russia’s economy will contract by 6 percent this year — a sharp fall, but less than the 10 percent or more that some economists were initially forecasting.</p> <p>To be sure, warning signs are flashing all around, contradicting Russian President Vladimir Putin’s <a href="#">claim</a> that sanctions have failed. Manufacturing of autos and other goods has plummeted because companies can’t import components, creating pockets of disgruntled, furloughed workers in some towns. Airlines have slashed international flights to near zero and are laying off pilots and cannibalizing some planes for parts that they can no longer buy overseas. Thousands of highly educated people have fled the country; hundreds of foreign companies, including Ikea and McDonald’s, are <a href="#">shutting down</a>, and Russia’s federal budget in July showed signs of distress.</p> <p>Sanctions “are working, definitely, but unfortunately much slower than everybody was expecting six months ago,” said Maxim Mironov, a Russian economist at IE Business School in Madrid.</p> <p>To inflict more damage, economists say, the European Union must cut Russia’s main lifeline: oil and gas export revenue. The United States and the United Kingdom have banned Russian oil and gas imports, but Europe, which <a href="#">relies heavily</a> on Russian energy, has only agreed to restrict purchases over time. The</p>

White House and others are [pushing](#) for more immediate action via a worldwide cap on the price of Russian oil, which would force Moscow to sell at a discount to global prices.

U.S. diplomats are pressing allies to accept the cap, which they view as “the biggest macroeconomic measure that remains,” according to a senior Biden administration official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive diplomatic talks.

Russia is facing “a sharp economic recession, and the recession is almost certainly going to be protracted in the next year, too,” the official said. “Look, they were able between the higher energy prices and between some of their own management to have a slightly less sharp economic recession than some of the initial estimates ... but I think what you’re seeing now is a kind of Potemkin economy.”

As Russian authorities promoted festivals, pro-Kremlin concerts and militaristic camps for children this summer, external signs of economic damage were muted in Moscow, where beautiful summer weather drew crowds to parks and outdoor cafes.

One bar owner in the Russian capital told The Washington Post that he is coping with the new reality.

“Many companies and distributors, of course, left the market, but alternatives are popping up every day, so we are switching,” said the businessman, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to talk freely. “For example, there are many Russian gins now. Some of them aren’t half bad.”

Others complained about higher prices for groceries and imported treats.

“In terms of food prices, some things have gotten more expensive, especially some exotic fruits or imported goods, like coffee,” said one woman, a social media manager from Moscow, who also spoke on the condition of anonymity to talk freely. “I’m a coffee lover, but decent ones like Illy or Lavazza have doubled in prices.”

The picture is bleaker in provincial Tikhvin, a two-factory town 114 miles east of St. Petersburg, where an Ikea furniture factory and the Tikhvin Freight Car Plant (TVSZ) have halted production.

Ikea joined hundreds of other Western companies in [quitting](#) the Russian market after the war in Ukraine. TVSZ was forced to furlough its employees and stop its assembly line after a vital U.S. supplier — Ohio-based Timken, which makes components known as bearings — [suspended](#) its Russian operations in March. Dozens of small businesses associated with the plant, including transportation firms and caterers, were hard hit in the town of 58,000 on the Tikhvinka River, a trade route dating to the 15th century.

Plant director Yevgeny Kuzmenko told local media in June that the company was hoping to find a Russian manufacturer capable of making bearings.

“Everyone needs to be saved,” he said. “Today the priority is to save jobs.”

But residents grew angry as machines sat silent for months, particularly after the regional governor’s statement that it would take at least until September to sort out the problem.

“Bearings — what a difficult thing to manufacture! You’re not launching a man into space!” said Sergei Kondakov, 46, of the nearby town Sviritsa, commenting on the Russian social media service VKontakte under the governor’s statement.

One worker, Maria Schedrina, complained, “We have been sitting at home for almost two months.” She added that she would gladly do any kind of work at the factory, if it was available.

“Huge TVSZ stands still without bearings for its wagons. And it’s like that all over the country,” Roman Seregin, 48, posted.



Collapsing imports of components have hobbled all kinds of manufacturing — most prominently car production, which plummeted by almost 62 percent in the first half of the year, [according to](#) Russia's state statistics agency.

AvtoVAZ, which makes the popular Russian Lada car, stood idle for months as majority owner Renault suspended operations and then sold its 68 percent stake to a Russian state entity for 1 ruble.

In June, the manufacturer resumed production with an “anti-sanctions” car model that lacks air bags, anti-lock braking systems, air conditioning and emission controls.

Automakers, which employ 600,000 people across Russia, have in some cases furloughed workers and started paying them two-thirds of their salaries.

To keep the unemployment rate stable at about 4 percent, the Kremlin has pressured distressed companies to put workers on partially paid leave or to shorten their hours instead of laying them off, said Elina Ribakova, deputy chief economist at the Institute of International Finance, an association of banks and finance companies. That will help prevent unrest in the short term but is not sustainable in the long term, she said.

Russia has [stopped publishing](#) many economic statistics, making it difficult to judge how hard sanctions are hitting, but some data shows signs of distress.

Retail sales fell 10 percent in the second quarter compared with a year ago as Russians curbed their spending. Consumer confidence is at its lowest level since 2015, and 78 percent of Russians do not plan major purchases, according to Maria Shagina, a sanctions expert at the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

In July, Russia reported a federal budget deficit of 900 billion rubles as some sources of tax revenue fell, a “huge, huge gap” equaling 8 percent of gross domestic product, according to Sergei Guriev, an economist and a provost at Sciences Po in Paris.

“Putin still has cash because he's earned a lot of cash in the first months of the war when oil prices were high and the economy didn't tank yet. But now sanctions start to work, start working substantially,” Guriev said.

Economists at Yale University argued in a [recent paper](#) that sanctions are inflicting immense pain. “Defeatist headlines arguing that Russia's economy has bounced back are simply not factual — the facts are that, by any metric and on any level, the Russian economy is reeling, and now is not the time to step on the brakes,” they wrote.

Yet some aspects of sanctions have proved porous or not as hard-hitting as hoped. Europe's failure to quickly halt Russian oil purchases, due to its dependence, was a big missed opportunity, Shagina said. The E.U. is set to ban most Russian crude purchases in December and refined oil products in February.

“If we had targeted oil from the beginning, we could have seen much more quickly the massive consequences that the politicians were talking about,” Shagina said.

The ruble's rebound in value is another disappointment for sanctions architects. Its plunge when sanctions first hit sent many Russians scurrying to withdraw money from ATMs. Russia's central bank responded by placing [strict limits](#) on currency exchanges, withdrawals and hard-currency transfers overseas.

That, plus a sharp drop in Russia's imports, lowered demand for hard currency and [propped up](#) the ruble — an artificial and probably unsustainable fix, but one that eased the bank runs and reduced the odds of immediate public unrest.



While many Western and Asian countries have sharply curbed exports to Russia — to comply with sanctions or because individual companies are choosing not to trade with Russia — exports from some nations, including Turkey and China, have [rebounded](#) somewhat in recent weeks, Ribakova said.

Last week, the U.S. Treasury Department “raised concerns” with Turkey’s Finance Ministry that Russian entities are attempting to use Turkey to evade sanctions, Treasury said in a statement.

Russian tour operators, meanwhile, have started offering [shopping trips](#) to Belarus, where consumers can buy brands such as Zara and Nike that have quit the Russian market.

Although cars and car parts are especially hard for Russians to find, secondhand sellers on social media are filling some of the gap, offering parts or hardware brought in from Kazakhstan and Belarus.

“We will order and bring you new parts from Europe or Kazakhstan: brake disks, oils, clutch kits for Audis and BMWs, new spare parts for American cars,” one ad in a Telegram group of nearly 18,000 people said. “We won’t find everything but we can find a lot!”

Russian officials have tried to convince the public that all will be well.

Sergei Kiriyeenko, first deputy head of the presidential administration, told a youth forum last month that with the departure of foreign companies, Russia just needed to dream big. Listing famous Russians such as writer Anton Chekhov and the first man in space, Yuri Gagarin, he said: “They just created something new. They were not afraid to dream, to follow their dream. In reality, the future of our great country depends on how ambitiously you dream.”

But while sanctions may not be acting swiftly enough to provoke a public uprising or to constrain Russia’s ability to wage war in coming months, the long-term impact will be immensely damaging to the country, experts say.

“The technological gap between Russia and the advanced economies will widen over time,” Ilya Matveev, a political scientist in St. Petersburg, wrote in a [recent paper](#). “In the absence of global cooperation and with hundreds of thousands of skilled professionals having left the country, innovative and technological advancement in Russia is simply impossible.”

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HEADLINE	08/23 Russia struggles form new military units
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.thedefensepost.com/2022/08/23/russia-struggling-army/">https://www.thedefensepost.com/2022/08/23/russia-struggling-army/</a>
GIST	<p>Russia has been unable to form new military units due to a lack of men willing to go to war, recent <a href="#">intelligence</a> from the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence revealed.</p> <p>The intel cited Moscow’s recent unsuccessful attempt to establish a new tank battalion due to insufficient troop numbers.</p> <p>Since the beginning of July, only 30 people have volunteered to be part of the battalion out of the 160 required.</p> <p>Russian officials have reportedly promised 10,000 Russian rubles (\$167) monthly to the families of new recruits. However, the incentive has not significantly increased the number of people willing to fight in Ukraine.</p> <p><b>Continuing Struggles</b></p> <p>Since President <b>Vladimir Putin</b> launched his “<a href="#">special military operation</a>” against Ukraine on February 24, Russian forces have suffered major losses due to stiff Ukrainian resistance.</p>

	<p>A report by <i>Forbes</i> revealed that Russia <a href="#">had lost more than \$5 billion</a> in military equipment a month after the invasion began.</p> <p>Over 2,500 pieces of enemy equipment had reportedly been destroyed as Moscow's forces continued to launch offensives against key Ukrainian regions.</p> <p>A US defense official also claimed that Russia is <a href="#">struggling to resupply its troops</a> with new weapons and equipment due to the sanctions imposed by the West.</p> <p>According to the anonymous official, the sanctions have hampered Moscow's ability to produce tanks and rifles due to a shortage of foreign-made components.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Boise Idaho housing into buyer's market</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.axios.com/2022/08/23/boise-real-estate-price-cuts">https://www.axios.com/2022/08/23/boise-real-estate-price-cuts</a>
GIST	<p>Nearly 70% of home sellers in Boise, Idaho cut the asking price on their house in July, Redfin reports; a remarkable turn for the once-hot real estate market.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nationwide, the number was 32% — up from 27% in July 2019.</li> </ul> <p><b>Why it matters:</b> This is just the latest indication that the pandemic housing boom is going bust, as higher mortgage rates chill demand for homes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The high percentage of cuts show that sellers expectations are too high: They're still living in the world of wild bidding wars.</li> <li>"They priced too high because their neighbor's home sold for an exorbitant price a few months ago, and expected to receive multiple offers the first weekend because they heard stories about that happening," said Boise Redfin agent Shauna Pendleton in the company's press release.</li> </ul> <p><b>Keep in mind:</b> While the percentage of sellers cutting prices is very high in Boise, the actual price cuts are quite modest — less than 5% off the original list price.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The median listing price for a home in Boise fell \$30,000 to \$613,000 in July from the prior month, according to data from Zillow.</li> <li>But prices are still, as <a href="#">Crazy Eddie was famous</a> for yelling, "Insane:" In July 2019, the median list price for a home there was \$381,000.</li> <li>Nationwide, the median home sales price fell \$10,000 in July from the month before, the <a href="#">National Association of Realtors reported</a> last Friday. But it's still near a record high.</li> </ul> <p><b>What's next:</b> Home prices are likely to come down further.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Home values fall first time since 2012</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.marketwatch.com/story/u-s-house-values-fell-for-the-first-time-since-2012-zillow-says-sellers-are-receiving-fewer-bids-and-offering-buyers-more-concessions-11661196708">https://www.marketwatch.com/story/u-s-house-values-fell-for-the-first-time-since-2012-zillow-says-sellers-are-receiving-fewer-bids-and-offering-buyers-more-concessions-11661196708</a>
GIST	<p>The housing market isn't crashing, but it's definitely feeling the burn.</p> <p>After two frenzied years, home buying is cooling off as mortgage rates rise. Some experts in the field are calling it a "<a href="#">housing recession</a>."</p> <p>U.S. home values fell in July by 0.1%, compared to the month before, a <a href="#">new Zillow report said</a>.</p> <p>While deceleration in home-price growth is typical for this time of the year, Zillow noted, the small decline is the first monthly dip since 2012.</p> <p>The typical U.S. home value fell by \$366 in July, and is now \$357,107, as measured by the Zillow Home Value Index.</p>

Given the dip in July, Zillow [revised its forecast](#) for the growth in home values to 2.4% through the end of July 2023. The current rate of growth is 16%.

But this hardly counts as a crash in prices, because the typical home value is also up 44.5% from July 2019 before the COVID-19 pandemic.

At this point, sellers are finding themselves with fewer offers, and are having to offer more concessions themselves to entice buyers.

Buyers in turn are gaining more options, seeing inventory gradually rise, as the pendulum slowly swings into their direction.

The dip in July is a “badly needed rebalancing that gives home buyers more options, more time to shop and more negotiating power,” Skylar Olsen, chief economist at Zillow [Z, +2.42%](#), said in a statement.

Homes have become unaffordable for many, given the high prices and mortgage rates. “As prices soften, many will renew their interest, and we will continue our progress back to ‘normal’,” Olsen added.

Home value declines were largest in San Jose, Calif., San Francisco, Calif., Phoenix, Ariz., and Austin, Texas. In these markets, the time listings spend on the market is rising fast.

“Our prices have come off of their irrational highs of the last 18 months. It’s kind of a rebalancing,” Dave Walsh, vice president and manager of Compass Realty San Jose, told MarketWatch.

Instead of homes listed on the market getting multiple offers, there are maybe one or two offers per home. “From your buyer’s point of view, there’s a much better opportunity for them to get something at a much more affordable price,” he added.

At open houses in the Bay Area, multiple buyers are turning up — but the lines are nowhere near as long as they were during the pandemic years. “That was just off the tracks,” Walsh, a four-decade housing-industry veteran, said. “We’ve never had a year like 2020 in many of my years in being in the business.”

Home values rose the most in Miami, Fla., Richmond, Va., and Memphis, Tenn. But monthly growth has decelerated as well in these markets, Zillow noted.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Recall: Hyundai, Kia SUVs</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cbsnews.com/news/hyundai-and-kia-suv-recall-fire-risk/">https://www.cbsnews.com/news/hyundai-and-kia-suv-recall-fire-risk/</a>
GIST	<p>Hyundai and Kia are recalling more than 280,000 SUVs over fire risks, and telling owners of the recalled vehicles to park them outside and away from buildings.</p> <p>The recall includes more than 245,000 Hyundai Palisade and 36,000 Kia Telluride SUVs in the U.S. with model years 2020 through 2022.</p> <p>In a <a href="#">news release</a> posted Tuesday, the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) said debris and moisture can accumulate in the vehicles' harness modules after attaching an accessory tow hitch, which are sold at dealerships. The debris and moisture can cause an electrical short, and may spark a fire while the cars are driving or parked.</p> <p>The Korean automakers reported 25 fires or melting incidents in the U.S. and Canada, but no crashes or injuries.</p>

	<p>Those who own the Hyundai SUVs under recall can take them to a dealership, where they will inspect the wiring and remove a fuse as necessary an interim repair, according to the NHTSA. Kia doesn't have an interim repair. Both companies say a final repair is being developed.</p> <p>"When a repair is available, all owners of vehicles potentially equipped with affected trailer hitch wiring harnesses will be notified by mail with instructions to bring their vehicles to a Hyundai or Kia dealer," the NHTSA said.</p> <p>In addition, dealerships have stopped selling the affected SUVs until repairs are made.</p> <p>The recall comes days after GM announced it was <a href="#">recalling</a> hundreds of thousands of vehicles because of a problem with third-row seat belts.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>08/23 Airline delays in summer travel nightmares</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.cbsnews.com/news/flight-delays-cancellations-pete-buttigieg/">https://www.cbsnews.com/news/flight-delays-cancellations-pete-buttigieg/</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>Summer travel nightmares have continued, with more than 19,000 flights delayed and nearly 3,000 more canceled since Sunday in the U.S. This summer, nearly a quarter of flights by U.S. airlines have been delayed, according to FlightAware. The average delay has been almost an hour.</p> <p>Severe weather coupled with airline and air traffic control staffing issues made Paul Thompson's trip from Los Angeles to New York a three-day trek.</p> <p>"It's incredibly frustrating. I mean, you can't rely upon anything," Thompson said.</p> <p>In New York, Joby Palathinkal, his wife and their toddler got stuck trying to get to Tampa.</p> <p>"Delayed another hour, delayed another hour," he said. "And now today, the same thing is happening again."</p> <p>Cancellations in Denver had airlines rolling out cots for stranded flyers.</p> <p>In Seattle, there was a different disruption on an Alaska Airlines flight to San Diego as the plane's engine cover ripped off during takeoff Monday morning. No one was injured.</p> <p>"We are still seeing far, far too many delays and cancellations," Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg told CBS News, adding that he thinks airlines need to be held to a higher standard.</p> <p>Buttigieg <a href="#">sent a letter</a> to airlines last week calling their performance unacceptable. Airlines say they've reduced flying and increased hiring in an attempt to keep pace.</p> <p>"It doesn't take nearly as long to qualify somebody to get into a call center as it does the cockpit," Buttigieg said. "We need to make sure of is that passengers have a clear understanding of their rights."</p> <p>The Transportation Department plans to launch a website in the coming days that makes clear what kinds of accommodations each U.S. airline provides for delays and cancellations. The department is also finalizing new regulations that would require refunds for lengthy delays or significant schedule changes.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>08/23 Wastewater data signals Covid plateau</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/Health/covid-19-wastewater-data-signals-potential-viral-plateau/story?id=88752837">https://abcnews.go.com/Health/covid-19-wastewater-data-signals-potential-viral-plateau/story?id=88752837</a>
<b>GIST</b>	The number of U.S. wastewater sites reporting increases in the presence of COVID-19 in their samples appears to be plateauing after a significant decline in recent weeks.

Federal data shows that about 44% of wastewater sites, which are currently providing data to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, have reported an increase in the presence of the COVID-19 virus in their wastewater over the last 15 days, up slightly from the 40% of sites reporting increases one week ago.

Several sites across the Midwest and New York area, in particular, appear to be seeing increases, according to the data. However, it is important to note that data is unavailable for many areas of the country, particularly across much of the South and the West.

Even with plateauing wastewater levels, the new rate of COVID-19 infections continues to fall. The country is currently reporting just under 90,000 new cases each day -- marking the lowest daily average since May.

However, notably, testing levels have plummeted in recent months, with now 400,000 tests reported each day -- comparatively the lowest total since the onset of the pandemic.

Alongside new cases, hospital admission levels also continue to fall nationally. About 5,000 virus-positive Americans are entering the hospital each day, down by about 14.3% in the last week.

Although there are still about 40,000 virus-positive Americans receiving care in the U.S., overall, the totals remain significantly lower than at the nation's peak in January, when there were more than 160,000 patients hospitalized with the virus.

Even with the daily cases and hospitalization levels falling, death rates are still very high. The average number of daily COVID-19-related deaths remains just under 400 reported each day.

Thousands are still losing their lives every week, and over the last seven days alone, the U.S. has reported about 2,700 deaths -- still one of the highest weekly totals in months.

Since the beginning of 2022, more than 211,000 people have been lost to COVID-19.

Although health experts say the U.S. is certainly in a better place than it was two years, with more vaccines and therapeutics available, Americans must realize that the virus continues to circulate and pose a threat to many vulnerable and unvaccinated people.

On Tuesday, Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government's top infectious disease expert who recently announced that he would step down from his governmental posts, stressed that the U.S. vaccination rate continues to stagnate at an "unacceptabl[y]" low level.

"We have the wherewithal to do it, we have to implement it," Fauci told CNN. "We still, as I told you several times over the past couple of years, we only have 67% of our population vaccinated and only about half of those have been boosted. That is really unacceptable when you compare us to the rest of the world, including lower- and middle-income countries."

Just under 70 million Americans are still completely unvaccinated, and more than half of eligible Americans have yet to receive their first booster shot.

Fauci added that it will be critical to use all the tools, such as vaccines and boosters, at the country's disposal, to avoid continued pain and suffering caused by the virus.

"We've got to do better than that," he said. "This is a formidable virus, no matter what you do, there is going to be suffering and pain. We can alleviate it a lot better if we follow the very obvious public health practices of vaccinating and boosting and hopefully as we get into the fall, and the more updated boosters, particularly the new bivalent boosters that become available in September, that we utilize them."

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SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/india-fires-military-officers-pakistan-missile-misfire-88768667">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/india-fires-military-officers-pakistan-missile-misfire-88768667</a>
GIST	<p>NEW DELHI -- India's air force said Tuesday that three military officers have been dismissed for accidentally firing an unarmed missile into rival Pakistan in March.</p> <p>A formal inquiry found that “deviation from the Standard Operating Procedures by three officers” led to the BrahMos cruise missile being fired into Pakistan, the air force said in a statement.</p> <p>The missile launched March 9 landed in Pakistan's eastern Punjab province and damaged a wall in a residential area. No deaths or injuries were reported.</p> <p>Pakistan’s military at the time said it tracked the missile from its launch and during its more than three-minute-long flight inside Islamabad's airspace. Pakistani officials demanded an explanation from India, criticizing the launch as a “flagrant violation” that violated the country's airspace.</p> <p>Two days after the launch, India’s defense ministry said the missile was fired by accident because of a “technical malfunction” during routine maintenance and called the incident “deeply regrettable.”</p> <p>Nuclear-armed Pakistan and India have a history of bitter relations mainly over the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir, which is divided between them and claimed by both in its entirety. Since gaining independence from British rule in 1947, the countries have fought two of their three wars over Kashmir.</p> <p>Relations between the countries have been especially strained since 2019, when Pakistan’s air force shot down an Indian warplane in the Pakistan-administered section of Kashmir and captured a pilot in response to an airstrike by Indian aircraft targeting militants in the northwestern town of Balakot inside Pakistan.</p> <p>India at the time said its airstrikes targeted Pakistan-based militants responsible for a suicide bombing that killed 40 Indian troops in Indian-controlled Kashmir. Pakistan later released the pilot.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Heavy rain, flooding Louisiana, Mississippi</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/heavy-rain-flooding-threat-moves-east-dallas-reels/story?id=88733654">https://abcnews.go.com/US/heavy-rain-flooding-threat-moves-east-dallas-reels/story?id=88733654</a>
GIST	<p>As <a href="#">Dallas reels from deadly flooding</a>, the downpours are now moving east.</p> <p>The heaviest rain Tuesday afternoon is in northern Louisiana and into Jackson, Mississippi, where flash flooding is likely.</p> <p>Archibald, Louisiana, has recorded over 8 inches of rain so far while Garden City, Mississippi, saw 7.2 inches.</p> <p>Several spots in Mississippi broke daily rainfall records on Monday, which could happen again on Tuesday.</p> <p>The forecast shows the heaviest rain falling in northeast Louisiana and central Mississippi, where 6 to 10 inches is expected over the next two days.</p> <p>This comes after downpours pounded the Dallas region Sunday night and Monday, at one point reaching 3.01 inches of rain in one hour.</p> <p>A state of disaster was declared Monday night in Dallas County as officials announced that a 60-year-old woman died when her car was swept away in floodwaters.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 IRS reviews safety measures amid threats</b>
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SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/irs-conducting-comprehensive-review-existing-safety-security-measures/story?id=88761653">https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/irs-conducting-comprehensive-review-existing-safety-security-measures/story?id=88761653</a>
GIST	<p>The Internal Revenue Service said it is conducting a comprehensive review of its security systems amid recent threats against IRS employees.</p> <p>Some of the rhetoric comes after many Republican lawmakers and media figures claimed, without evidence, that the \$78 billion being sent to the IRS over 10 years as part of the <a href="#">Inflation Reduction Act</a> is so more agents can be hired to audit the middle class.</p> <p>"This includes conducting risk assessments based on data-driven decisions given the current environment and monitoring perimeter security, designations of restricted areas, exterior lighting, security around entrances to our facilities and other various protections," IRS Commissioner Charles Rettig wrote to employees and obtained by ABC News.</p> <p>"We also monitor threat intelligence and have increased engagement with TIGTA, Department of Homeland Security and local law enforcement officials so we're ready to implement additional countermeasures and notifications to employees if circumstances warrant," Rettig wrote.</p> <p>The commissioner said it is personal.</p> <p>"I'll continue to make every effort to dispel any lingering misperceptions about our work. And I will continue to advocate for your safety in every venue where I have an audience," he said. "You go above and beyond every single day, and I am honored to work with each of you."</p> <p>There has been much debate about an increase in IRS agents.</p> <p>The Internal Revenue Service does not plan to use the nearly \$80 billion it's set to receive in funding from the Inflation Reduction Act to hire 87,000 new agents in order to target middle class Americans, a Treasury Department official told ABC News last week and documents verify, rejecting a claim widely circulated by Republican lawmakers and right-wing media personalities.</p> <p>In a letter to Rettig, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said the agency is planning on hiring auditors who can enforce the tax laws against high-income Americans and corporations, not the middle class, along with employees to provide customer service to taxpayers. The majority of hires will fill the positions of about 50,000 IRS employees on the verge of retirement, which will net about 20,000 - 30,000 workers, not 87,000.</p> <p>"New staff will be hired to improve taxpayer services and experienced auditors who can take on corporate and high-end tax evaders, without increasing audit rates relative to historical norms for people earning under \$400,000 each year," Treasury Department spokesperson Julia Krieger said in a statement last week.</p> <p>The billions heading toward the IRS are part of the Inflation Reduction Act <a href="#">signed into law by President Joe Biden</a> earlier this month.</p>
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## Cyber, Tech Awareness

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HEADLINE	08/23 Ukraine, Poland agree counter Russia cyber
SOURCE	<a href="https://therecord.media/ukraine-and-poland-agree-to-jointly-counter-russian-cyberattacks/">https://therecord.media/ukraine-and-poland-agree-to-jointly-counter-russian-cyberattacks/</a>
GIST	Ukraine and Poland signed an agreement on Monday to strengthen cybersecurity collaboration as officials warn of potential cyberattacks from Kremlin-linked hackers.



The countries decided to jointly fight cybercrime and share their experience in combating cyber threats, including those from Russia, [according to](#) the Ukrainian Ministry of Digital Transformation.

Poland is Ukraine's closest neighbor — more than 1.2 million Ukrainian refugees [moved](#) there during the war, including [thousands](#) of tech specialists.

Due to its close ties with Ukraine and strong [financial support](#) to the war-torn country, Poland has become a popular target for Russian hackers.

Cyberattacks on Poland [began](#) shortly after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and in July a pro-Kremlin hacking group called Killnet [took down](#) Poland's key government websites.

“With Poland, we have not only a common physical border but also a joint problem in cyberspace, where we experience the same kind of attacks,” said Ukraine's Minister of Digital Transformation Mykhailo Fedorov. “I am sure that together we will become stronger and more effective.”

According to the agreement, Ukraine and Poland will jointly participate in cybersecurity conferences and work to prevent the spread of Russian disinformation in the media.

During the meeting on Monday, the countries also agreed to exchange digital documents in their e-government apps — Ukrainian Diia app and Polish mObywatel.

Now Ukrainians who have moved to Poland will have access to the Ukrainian digital driver's licenses, vehicle registration certificates, and residence permits in the Polish mObywatel app.

Ukraine, in turn, will soon recognize some of the Polish digital documents, according to Fedorov. “This is the first case in the world when two countries exchange digital documents in mobile apps,” he [wrote](#) on Telegram.

#### **Agreements with allies**

This is not the first time Ukraine is trying to find support from other countries to overcome cyber threats. In July, for instance, it signed an agreement with Slovenia and the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA).

Since the start of the invasion, many of Ukraine's closest allies have suffered from Russian cyberattacks — mostly without serious consequences.

Earlier in August, Killnet [took down](#) the website of Latvia's parliament after lawmakers there designated Russia as a “state sponsor of terrorism.”

Last week Estonia said that it had repelled the biggest wave of cyberattacks in more than a decade, launched shortly after the Estonian government decided to remove Soviet-era monuments from the country.

This attack, attributed to Killnet, “has gone largely unnoticed,” according to Luukas Ilves, Estonia's undersecretary for digital transformation.

In May, Killnet declared “war” against the U.S., the U.K., Germany, Italy, Latvia, Romania, Lithuania, Estonia and Poland for their support of Ukraine.

“If you think you are safe because you have EU cyber regulations in place and work together across the Union, the menace will come from outside, as it did,” said Janusz Cieszyński, Poland's Secretary of State for Digital Affairs, during the meeting with Ukraine's security officials on Monday.

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SOURCE	<a href="https://therecord.media/major-airline-technology-provider-accelya-attacked-by-ransomware-group/">https://therecord.media/major-airline-technology-provider-accelya-attacked-by-ransomware-group/</a>
GIST	<p>A technology provider for many of the world's largest airlines said it recently dealt with a ransomware attack impacting some of its systems.</p> <p>Accelya – a technology firm providing services to Delta, British Airways, JetBlue, United, Virgin Atlantic, American Airlines and many more – confirmed Tuesday that two of the security firms it hired to address the incident discovered that company data was posted on a ransomware leak site.</p> <p>The AlphV/Black Cat ransomware group published data it allegedly stole from Accelya last Thursday. The group claimed to have stolen emails, worker contracts and more.</p> <p>A spokesperson for Accelya told The Record that the experts the company hired managed to “quarantine” the ransomware before it could spread further throughout their system.</p> <p>“Our forensic investigators confirmed it was limited to a contained portion of our overall environment. We have no evidence to indicate that the malware could have moved laterally from our systems to our customers’ environments,” the spokesperson said.</p> <p>They added that the company is going over the data published to the AlphV leak site last week and will notify any customers who had information exposed.</p> <p>Accelya provides passenger, cargo, and industry analytics platforms for airline retailing. The company has more than 250 airlines that work with them across nine countries.</p> <p>The airline industry has been a ripe target for ransomware groups in 2022. In May, <a href="#">SpiceJet Airline</a> in India and a <a href="#">Canadian fighter jet supplier</a> were both hit with ransomware attacks.</p> <p>AlphV/Black Cat continues to be <a href="#">one of the most prolific</a> ransomware groups, with attacks over the last month on the <a href="#">city government of Alexandria, Louisiana</a> and <a href="#">several universities</a> throughout the spring.</p> <p>The group <a href="#">attacked two energy companies</a> in Luxembourg and Japanese video game giant <a href="#">Bandai Namco</a> last month</p> <p>According to several experts, AlphV/Black Cat is a <a href="#">rebrand</a> of the prolific <a href="#">BlackMatter ransomware group</a>, which itself was allegedly a rebrand of the DarkSide ransomware – a gang <a href="#">accused</a> of launching the headline-grabbing <a href="#">attack on Colonial Pipeline</a>.</p> <p>A representative of the group <a href="#">spoke to The Record</a> in February, claiming that most of the major ransomware groups are connected in one way or another.</p> <p>“Let’s just say: ‘We [have] borrowed their advantages and eliminated their disadvantages,’” the representative said, referring to Alphv’s relationship with other incarnations of the gang.</p> <p>An <a href="#">FBI alert released in April</a> said the law enforcement organization had tracked at least 60 ransomware attacks by the AlphV/Black Cat group as of March.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Data exfiltration worse than ransomware?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://thehackernews.com/2022/08/the-rise-of-data-exfiltration-and-why.html">https://thehackernews.com/2022/08/the-rise-of-data-exfiltration-and-why.html</a>
GIST	Ransomware is the de facto threat organizations have faced over the past few years. Threat actors were making easy money by exploiting the high valuation of cryptocurrencies and their victims' lack of adequate preparation.

Think about bad security policies, untested backups, patch management practices not up-to-par, and so forth. It resulted in easy growth for ransomware extortion, a crime that multiple threat actors around the world perpetrate.

Something's changed, though. Crypto valuations have dropped, reducing the monetary appeal of ransomware attacks due to organizations mounting a formidable defense against ransomware.

Threat actors have been searching for another opportunity – and found one. It's called data exfiltration, or exfil, a type of espionage causing headaches at organizations worldwide. Let's take a look.

### **The threat to reveal confidential information**

Information exfiltration is rapidly becoming more prevalent. Earlier this year, incidents at Nvidia, Microsoft, and several other companies have highlighted how big of a problem it's become – and how, for some organizations, it may be a threat that's even bigger than ransomware.

Nvidia, for example, became entangled in a complex tit-for-tat exchange with hacker group Lapsus\$. One of the biggest chipmakers in the world was faced with the public exposure of the source code for invaluable technology, as Lapsus\$ leaked the source code for the company's Deep Learning Super Sampling (DLSS) research.

When it comes to exfil extortion, attackers do not enter with the primary aim of encrypting a system and causing disruption the way that a ransomware attacker does. Though, yes, attackers may still use encryption to cover their tracks.

Instead, attackers on an information exfiltration mission will move vast amounts of proprietary data to systems that they control. And here's the game: attackers will proceed to extort the victim, threatening to release that confidential information into the wild or to sell it to unscrupulous third parties.

### **Exfil can be far more damaging than ransomware**

For victims, it's a serious threat because threat actors can acquire the keys to the safe. Competitors can use trade secrets to produce copies of products or aid in their R&D efforts or information that could lead to a costly public relations disaster.

Either way – public exposure of information can be a threat greater than ransomware because ransomware demand can be resolved by paying up (or by retrieving backups). Leaked information – well – that's something that may be unfixable. It's easy to see why threat actors can find extortion based on information leakage to be an even more attractive target than mere ransomware.

It's worth noting that part of the drive for this type of attack also lies in the current state of world affairs which have created a strong demand for intellectual property transfer across opposing geopolitical lines. There's also arguably greater leniency against actors attacking "the other side," even when local judicial systems consider the attack a crime.

### **In for the long haul**

There's another theme that's emerging in the exfil space. It's interesting to note something that cybersecurity teams have known for a long time: for malicious actors, it's beneficial for an attacker to stay undetected for an extended period of time.

Staying quietly, rather than flashing "you've been hacked" messages on computer screens, allows attackers to "see" more information flows in the network and to do more in-depth reconnaissance of systems after gaining entry.

More time in the network means attackers can identify more desirable targets than just a simple ransomware deployment. Patient threat actors could do far more harm; if they remain undetected.

### **Protective measures still work**

	<p>What can organizations do to guard against extortion? Well, the same cybersecurity principles continue to count, even more so given the greater risk.</p> <p>After so many years of alarming headlines, most organizations have deployed ransomware protection in the form of better backup strategies, more fine-tuned and granular data access, and better rules and monitoring for detecting unwanted file changes.</p> <p>It's made ransomware attacks harder, often acting as a deterrent against attackers simply looking for easy targets. Protecting against malware infections or information exfiltration starts with properly maintaining infrastructure.</p> <p><b>Seamless patching remains at the core</b></p> <p>That includes keeping systems up to date with the latest patches. It's not just a guard against ransomware, of course: patched systems also close the easy paths to critical business information so that threat actors are not in a position to siphon off critical business information.</p> <p>Suppose your organization is still relying on patching operations that involve maintenance windows. In that case, it's worth considering whether patching is happening fast enough to protect your organization against information exfiltration threats.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Media firms susceptible to compromise</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/media-twice-vulnerable-crosssector/">https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/media-twice-vulnerable-crosssector/</a>
GIST	<p>The percentage of media companies susceptible to compromise is double the figure across all other sectors, according to a new study from <a href="#">BlueVoyant</a>.</p> <p>The security vendor used its tools to perform a cybersecurity posture analysis on 485 organizations from the media industry to compile its <i>Media Industry Cybersecurity Challenges</i> <a href="#">report</a>.</p> <p>It found that 30% of those analyzed are exposed to compromise via vulnerabilities in their internet-facing, publicly accessible footprints. Exploitation of these vulnerabilities could lead to content theft and/or operational disruption.</p> <p>However, prompt patching remains a challenge: 60% of identified vulnerable systems were still unprotected six weeks after a patch had been issued, BlueVoyant said.</p> <p>Part of the challenge for the sector is the complexity of the supply chain, which might incorporate a wide variety of vendors, service providers, partners and technologies to move a creative idea from concept to camera to consumer, the report claimed.</p> <p>“The digital supply chain is a common attack vector not only for the media, but all industries,” argued Dan Vasile, BlueVoyant vice president of strategic development and former vice president of information security at Paramount.</p> <p>“In order to improve their cyber-defense posture, media companies should continuously monitor their extended vendor ecosystem, using analysis to prioritize mitigation of the most critical findings.”</p> <p>Half of the top vendors providing content management solutions to the media industry were found to have vulnerabilities in their products, according to the report.</p> <p>To enhance supply-chain security, BlueVoyant recommended media companies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and prioritize vendors, focusing on their criticality to content creation and delivery, and access to critical systems</li> <li>• Continuously monitor the supply chain using contextual analysis to prioritize serious vulnerabilities. Questionnaires and point-in-time scans are no longer sufficient</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use platforms to proactively track how critical vendors are addressing externally visible vulnerabilities and misconfigurations and work with them to minimize attack-surface risk</li> </ul>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/24 Healthcare: 5,000 data breaches since 2009</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/us-healthcare-breach-342m-records/">https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/us-healthcare-breach-342m-records/</a>
GIST	<p>Healthcare organizations (HCOs) in the US have suffered nearly 5000 publicly recorded data breaches since 2009, spilling hundreds of millions of records in the process, according to a new analysis from <a href="#">Comparitech</a>.</p> <p>The tech research and comparison company analyzed data from 2009 to June 2022 to better understand the scale of the security challenges facing the sector.</p> <p>Of the 4746 medical breaches recorded over the period, the largest numbers came in 2020 (803) and 2021 (711), although the most records were breached in 2015 (112 million).</p> <p>California accounted for the most breaches (around 10%) in total, but when sliced according to population size, Indiana comes out on top with 1.28 million records affected per 100,000 residents.</p> <p>In 2021 and 2022, hacking was the most common type of breach, accounting for over 40% each year. Next most frequent, excluding unknowns, was ransomware, which accounted for nearly a quarter (23%) of incidents last year.</p> <p>Medical breaches continue to be a challenge today, with the Center Hospitalier Sud Francilien (CHSF) <a href="#">near Paris</a> suffering a ransomware attack this week, which has led to a \$10m extortion demand.</p> <p>The top five medical breaches of all time in the US are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anthem, which impacted 78.8 million records in 2015. It stemmed from an employee opening a spear-phishing email</li> <li>• Optum360, which breached 11.5 million records containing personal and financial information on lab patients at the American Medical Collection Agency between August 2018 and March 2019</li> <li>• Premiera Blue Cross, which affected 11 million records and resulted in a \$6.9m fine after hackers used a phishing email to install malware. The breach went unnoticed from May 2014 until January 2015</li> <li>• Laboratory Corporation of America Holdings, which impacted 10.2 million records after an intruder accessed the payment website of partner American Medical Collection Agency in 2019</li> <li>• Excellus Health Plan, which breached 9.3 million records after hackers gained unauthorized access to the firm's IT systems from December 2013 until May 2015</li> </ul>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/24 Ransomware surges: 1.2M attacks/month</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/ransomware-surges-to-12-million/">https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/ransomware-surges-to-12-million/</a>
GIST	<p>Ransomware threat detections have risen to over one million per month this year, with a French hospital the latest to suffer a major outage.</p> <p>The 1000-bed Center Hospitalier Sud Francilien (CHSF) near Paris <a href="#">revealed it was hit</a> on Sunday morning, in an attack which has knocked out all the hospital's business software, storage systems including medical imaging, and patient admissions.</p> <p>This has led to all but the most urgent emergency patients being diverted to other facilities in the region.</p> <p><a href="#">France24 cited figures</a> claiming cyber-attacks against French hospitals surged 70% year-on-year in 2021.</p> <p>"Each day we need to rewrite patients' medications, all the prescriptions, the discharge prescriptions," Valerie Caudwell, president of the medical commission at CHSF hospital, reportedly said.</p>

"For the nurses, instead of putting in all the patients' data on the computer, they now need to file it manually from scratch."

Reports suggest Lockbit 3.0 may be to blame for the \$10m ransom demand, which the hospital is refusing to pay.

[Barracuda Networks](#) claimed in a [new report](#) out today that education, municipalities, healthcare, infrastructure and finance have remained the top five targets for ransomware over the past 12 months.

However, while attacks on local government increased only slightly, those targeting educational institutions more than doubled, and attacks on the healthcare and financial verticals tripled.

Overall, Barracuda claimed that ransomware detections between January and June of this year climbed to more than 1.2 million per month.

Fleming Shi, CTO at Barracuda, argued that small businesses need to be as alert as their larger counterparts because they are often targeted in stepping-stone attacks.

"As a result, it is essential for security providers to create products that are easy to use and implement, regardless of a company's size," he added. "Additionally, sophisticated security technologies should be available as services, so that businesses of all sizes can protect themselves against these ever-changing threats."

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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 'Donut Leaks' extortion gang recent attacks</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/new-donut-leaks-extortion-gang-linked-to-recent-ransomware-attacks/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/new-donut-leaks-extortion-gang-linked-to-recent-ransomware-attacks/</a>
GIST	<p>A new data extortion group named 'Donut Leaks' is linked to recent cyberattacks, including those on Greek natural gas company DESFA, UK architectural firm Sheppard Robson, and multinational construction company Sando.</p> <p>Two victims disclosed these attacks without much information regarding who was involved.</p> <p>Over the weekend, <a href="#">DESFA confirmed they suffered a cyberattack</a> after Ragnar Locker leaked screenshots of allegedly stolen data.</p> <p>Earlier this month, <a href="#">Sheppard Robson disclosed a ransomware attack</a> and an extortion attempt but did not provide details about who hacked its network.</p> <p>Finally, Hive Ransomware claimed last month to have attacked Sando but only released a small archive of files as 'proof' of the attack.</p> <p>Strangely, the data for these victims have now appeared on the data leak site for a previously unknown extortion gang known as Donut Leaks. Furthermore, the data shared on the Donut Leaks site is far more extensive than that shared on the ransomware sites, indicating that this new threat actor was involved in the attacks.</p> <p><b>Who are Donut Leaks?</b></p> <p>BleepingComputer first learned of the Donut Leaks extortion group from an employee of one of the victims, who told us that the threat actors breached the corporate network to steal data.</p> <p>Once the threat actors finish stealing data, BleepingComputer was told they emailed URLs of their Tor extortion sites to the victim's business partners and employees.</p>

These Tor sites consist of a shaming blog and a data storage site that allows visitors to browse and download all of the stolen, leaked data.

The shaming blog currently contains entries for five victims, with all but one containing generic descriptions of the company and a link to their stolen data.

However, for one of the entries, the threat actors appeared to take a more aggressive approach, sharing stolen Christmas party photos and a lengthy rant against the company.

The stolen data storage server runs the [File Browser](#) application, which allows visitors to browse through all of the stolen data stored on the server, broken down by the victim.

While there are only five victims listed on the shaming site, the storage server contains what appears to be ten victims.

...three victims are related to recent attacks disclosed by Sheppard Robson and DESFA, with Sando previously claimed by Hive. BleepingComputer has redacted the names of the other companies as they have not announced they suffered a cyberattack.

According to the File Browser stats, the threat actors have leaked approximately 2.8 TB of stolen data from these ten victims.

It is unknown whether the threat actors deploy ransomware when breaching networks or are simply a data extortion group.

However, Sheppard Robson did disclose that their recent attack was a ransomware attack.

"As is typical with a ransomware attack, the criminals contacted us for purposes of extortion," disclosed Sheppard Robson.

"We have refused to pay any money to the attackers as per ICO and NCSC guidance and have reported the incident to the police."

Furthermore, two different ransomware operations claimed responsibility for DESFA (Ragnar Locker) and SANDO (Hive).

This likely means that the threat actor running Donut Leaks is a pen tester or an affiliate for both Hive, Ragnar Locker, and possibly other ransomware operations.

In previous conversations with 'pentesters' for Ragnar Locker, the threat actors told us they work for multiple Ransomware-as-a-Service operations to provide affiliates access to internal networks. In some cases, these pentesters will steal the data and keep it for themselves if they feel that the data has value to it.

This new extortion group illustrates how stolen data is making it into the hands of multiple groups, with each trying its own methods to extort victims.

It also shows that paying a ransom demand may not always prevent your data from being leaked and could still lead to further extortion demands.

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HEADLINE	08/23 French hospital \$10M ransomware attack
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/french-hospital-hit-by-10m-ransomware-attack-sends-patients-elsewhere/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/french-hospital-hit-by-10m-ransomware-attack-sends-patients-elsewhere/</a>



GIST	<p>The Center Hospitalier Sud Francilien (CHSF), a 1000-bed hospital located 28km from the center of Paris, suffered a cyberattack on Sunday, which has resulted in the medical center referring patients to other establishments and postponing appointments for surgeries.</p> <p>CHSF serves an area of 600,000 inhabitants, so any disruption in its operations can endanger the health, and even lives, of people in a medical emergency.</p> <p>"This attack on the computer network makes the hospital's business software, the storage systems (in particular medical imaging), and the information system relating to patient admissions inaccessible for the time being," <a href="#">explains CHSF's announcement</a> (translated).</p> <p>The hospital's administration has not provided further updates on the situation, and the IT system outage that enforced reduced operations still plagues the establishment.</p> <p>Those in need of emergency care will be evaluated by CHSF's doctors, and if their condition requires medical imaging for treatment, they will be transferred to another medical center.</p> <p>According to Le Monde, which has info from the country's law enforcement agencies, the ransomware actors that hit CHSF demanded the payment of a ransom of \$10,000,000 in exchange for a decryption key.</p> <p>"An investigation for intrusion into the computer system and for attempted extortion in an organized gang has been opened to the cybercrime section of the Paris prosecutor's office," <a href="#">a police source told Le Monde</a>, also specifying that "the investigations were entrusted to the gendarmes of the Center fight against digital crime (C3N)".</p> <p><b>The LockBit 3.0 hypothesis</b></p> <p>French cybersecurity journalist <a href="#">Valéry Riess-Marchive</a> identified signs of a LockBit 3.0 infection, mentioning that the handling by the national gendarmerie is a clue pointing to that direction, as that service deals with Ragnar Locker and LockBit attacks.</p> <p>As Riess-Marchive explains at <a href="#">LegMagIT</a>, Ragnar Locker is unlikely to be behind the attack due to a different focus on the economic size of its victims, whereas LockBit 3.0 demonstrates a broader targeting scope.</p> <p>If LockBit 3.0 is responsible for the attack on CHSF, it will violate the RaaS program's rules, which prohibit affiliates from encrypting systems of healthcare providers.</p> <p>At this time, the attribution to the particular threat group hasn't been confirmed yet, and LockBit 3.0's extortion site contains no entry for CHSF yet, so their involvement remains a hypothesis.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Phishing attacks abusing SaaS platforms</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/phishing-attacks-abusing-saas-platforms-see-a-massive-1-100-percent-growth/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/phishing-attacks-abusing-saas-platforms-see-a-massive-1-100-percent-growth/</a>
GIST	<p>Threat actors are increasingly abusing legitimate software-as-a-service (SaaS) platforms like website builders and personal branding spaces to create malicious phishing websites that steal login credentials.</p> <p>According to a new report by <a href="#">Palo Alto Networks Unit 42</a>, researchers have seen a sharp rise in this abuse, with the data collected by the firm showing a massive increase of 1,100% from June 2021 to June 2022.</p> <p>The advantages of using SaaS for phishing include evading alerts from email security systems, enjoying high availability, and bypassing the need to learn how to code to create websites that appear legitimate.</p> <p>Top Articles <a href="#">READ MORE VMware Carbon Black causing BSOD crashes on Windows</a></p>

Also, because SaaS platforms simplify and streamline the process of creating new sites, phishing actors can easily switch to different themes, scale up or diversify their operations, and quickly respond to reports and takedowns.

### **Services abused for phishing**

Unit 42 has divided the abused platforms into six categories: file sharing and hosting sites, form and survey builders, website builders, note-taking and documentation writing platforms, and personal portfolio spaces.

Palo Alto Networks filtering systems recorded a growth in the abuse across all categories, but the most significant were website builders, collaboration platforms, and form builders.

Also, the stats indicate a notable rise in October 2021, based mainly on the sudden uptick in the abuse of form builders.

In 2021, [Cyren](#) reported about the rampant abuse of "typeform.com" for phishing, an older report from [Trend Micro](#) mentioned "123formbuilder.com", "formtools.com", and "smartsurvey.co.uk", while [Cofense](#) highlighted the abuse of "Canva.com".

Around the same time, another uptick was spotted, augmented by the abuse of a personal branding site the report doesn't name.

### **How the services are used**

The Unit 42 report explains that in many cases, the phishing actors host their credential stealing pages directly on the abused services, so they send an email to targets containing a URL leading to the page.

In other cases, however, the landing pages hosted on the abused services don't contain the credential-stealing forms themselves. Instead, they take the victim through one more redirection step to another site.

The phishing site can be hosted on a bulletproof service provider that doesn't respond to takedown requests, so the phishing actors follow that practice to increase campaign uptime while sacrificing the conversion rate.

Even if the phishing page isn't well protected, hiding it behind one more layer reduces the labor required to set everything up again in the case of a takedown.

"In the event that the final credential-stealing page is taken down, the attacker can simply change the link and point to a new credential-stealing page, preserving the effectiveness of the original campaign," reads the report.

### **Not going away anytime soon**

Stopping the abuse of legitimate SaaS platforms will be very hard, as implementing aggressive email filters against those services isn't a choice.

That's precisely what makes them so suitable for phishing campaigns and why the rise in its abuse since last year has been so startling.

If a message that makes bold claims or requests urgent action from you lands in your inbox, avoid clicking embedded links or buttons, but instead use a search engine to locate the official site of the potentially spoofed platform.

Whenever you're requested to enter your account credentials, ensure that you are on the legitimate website URL before you start typing in the form boxes.

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SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/chrome-internet-download-manager-adware-has-200-000-installs/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/chrome-internet-download-manager-adware-has-200-000-installs/</a>
GIST	<p>Google Chrome extension 'Internet Download Manager' installed by more than 200,000 users is adware.</p> <p>The extension has been sitting on the Chrome Web Store since at least June 2019, according to the earliest reviews posted by users.</p> <p>Although the extension may install a known and legitimate download manager program, BleepingComputer observed unwanted behavior exhibited by the extension—such as opening links to spammy sites, changing the default browser search engine, and further hounding the user with pop-ups asking them to download more "patches" and unwanted programs.</p> <p><b>Dodgy Chrome extension installed by 200,000+ users</b></p> <p>A concered BleepingComputer reader reached out to us on seeing a Chrome add-on "running malicious sites by impersonating famous software."</p> <p>And their concern seems valid. The 'Internet Download Manager' browser extension installed by more than 200,000 users to date doesn't seem all that innocent.</p> <p>There does exist a legitimate Windows program called Internet Download Manager, published by software company Tonec.</p> <p>Tonec does offer Internet Download Manager extensions for Firefox and Chrome. But, the authentic Chrome extension provided by the company is called <a href="#">'IDM Integration Module.'</a></p> <p>Further, Tonec's FAQ specifically <a href="#">warns</a>, "Please note that all IDM extensions that can be found in Google Store are fake and should not be used."</p> <p>By contrast, the counterfeit 'Internet Download Manager' Chrome extension seems to be maintained by a website called "<a href="#">Puupnewsapp</a>" that claims "it increases your download speed up to 500%" making it a "super software" for downloading games, movies, music, and "large files in minutes." Sounds promising.</p> <p>The instructions provided by the knock-off extension are even more perplexing—why does one need to download and install multiple programs after installing the extension?</p> <p><b>Alters search engines, promotes spam</b></p> <p>What also stood out to us was that installing the extension in a <a href="#">test environment</a> changed the default browser search engine to <i>smartwebfinder[.]com</i>.</p> <p>Frequent pop-ups urging the user to install more add-ons, such as for Firefox, were also observed, as was the extension launching third-party sites in the browser.</p> <p>Luckily, reviewers, some from as early as 2019, seem to have spotted the dodgy behavior. Although plenty of (likely inauthentic) reviewers claim to have no issues with the extension.</p> <p>BleepingComputer readers have previously reported issues with <a href="#">similar rogue extensions</a> they'd found on the Chrome Web Store.</p> <p>BleepingComputer reached out to Tonec for comment, and we have also notified Google of the malicious extension prior to publishing.</p> <p>A quick search on the Chrome Web Store for "IDM," "IDM integration add-ons," or "Download Manager" will yield results containing extensions with hundreds of thousands of user installs, and favorable reviews that may appear promising.</p>

	While not all of these extensions may be harmful, users should be cautious when installing new Chrome extensions and verify if these are official versions published by trusted software vendors.
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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Third-party attacks spike</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cybersecuritydive.com/news/supply-chain-cyberattacks/630179/?&amp;web_view=true">https://www.cybersecuritydive.com/news/supply-chain-cyberattacks/630179/?&amp;web_view=true</a>
GIST	<p>Third-party intrusions, such as those recently at <a href="#">Twilio</a> and <a href="#">Mailchimp</a>, serve yet another reminder how quickly and far supply-chain attacks can spread.</p> <p>When an attack on one organization becomes a window for potential attacks on many, threat actors take notice and circle back for more. Unauthorized access is often gained through phishing and social engineering attacks.</p> <p>Third-party vendor attacks are growing because of this amplification effect. The level of access or data open to potential exposure throughout the supply chain presents threat actors with a means to hit more targets with more consistency and success.</p> <p>“Threat actors will use any available path to get into a company,” said Curtis Franklin, senior analyst at Omdia. “The great lesson should be there are no innocuous connections, there are no intrinsically safe partnerships.”</p> <p>A phishing attack against Twilio impacted 125 customers, subsequently exposing the phone numbers and verification codes for <a href="#">1,900 Signal users</a>. When social engineering attacks compromised Mailchimp’s internal tooling, it identified <a href="#">214 affected accounts</a>, including DigitalOcean.</p> <p>Third-party tools and services provide cybercriminals with an attack surface that can open extensive pathways. If the front or side doors of a large enterprise or other intended target are better defended, there might be a weak point in vents.</p> <p>“You know how in old movies you always smuggle things in and out of the prison in a laundry cart and a white van with no windows? That’s the equivalent of what we are seeing here,” Chester Wisniewski, principal research scientist at Sophos, said in an email.</p> <p>Finding those points of compromise often triggers opportunities for attacks downstream. Some supply-chain attacks are highly targeted against a specific organization while others are random, leading attackers to potential secondary targets after a link in the supply chain is compromised.</p> <p><b>The highly-targeted approach</b></p> <p>“Threat actors are patient and they are persistent,” Franklin said. “The moment they know more about your relationships and your automated processes that you do, you’re in serious danger.”</p> <p>As seen in the recent <a href="#">digital identity supply chain attacks</a> against Mailchimp and Twilio, threat actors can extend the potential target radius even further by focusing on email marketing providers or other commonly used services with large customer bases.</p> <p>“In many cases the supply chain map is a way for attackers to hit their primary target by using third-party gaps to outflank the target and avoid frontal assaults that have proven futile,” Ron Westfall, senior analyst and research director at Futurum Research, said in an email.</p> <p>Social-engineering attacks, including incidents at Twilio and Mailchimp, confirm the increasing levels of sophistication needed to execute downstream supply-chain breaches, he said.</p> <p>These identity security and data access compromises exemplify how well some threat actors have mapped out third-party supply chains and why organizations need to better map out their third-party security risks, Westfall said.</p>

Many companies are struggling to better protect their supply chains from third-party risk, let alone map out and assess every potential point of intrusion.

Managed service providers are another attractive target for potential dispersion, according to Tyler McLellan, senior principal threat analyst at Mandiant. “They may offer access directly into a victim, hold third-party data, or offer an opportunity to infect software in the supply chain providing indirect access to an organization’s clients,” he said in an email.

#### **Maximum reward for minimum effort**

Seemingly aimless attacks on third-party systems that snowball to others can be just as damaging for organizations and lucrative for threat actors.

Some of this spread comes down to luck and human behavior.

“Threat actors are people and people like to find shortcuts to maximize their reward for the minimum amount of effort,” McLellan said. “Targeting one organization that may provide access to data from other organizations offers a couple benefits. Besides the obvious potential access to multiple victims, there may be two parties to ransom with the same data.”

Some attacks on third-party vendors spread quickly because the campaigns don’t require much work.

“It’s not like they’re actively working,” said Alla Valente, senior analyst at Forrester. “They can kind of passively throw it out there and see who bites. And if you have multiple that bite, that’s even better.”

Many of these threat actors are getting lucky, she said, and perhaps even more so than they expected.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Interstate cyber command center expands</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://gcn.com/cybersecurity/2022/08/interstate-cyber-command-center-expands/376146/">https://gcn.com/cybersecurity/2022/08/interstate-cyber-command-center-expands/376146/</a>
GIST	<p>A command center founded by North Dakota to facilitate interstate cooperation on cybersecurity and threat intelligence has expanded and <a href="#">now comprises</a> nearly 20% of states, North Dakota Chief Information Officer Shawn Riley announced.</p> <p>The Joint-Cybersecurity Operations Command Center enables states to identify active threats and alert other states in a bid to stop the spread of attacks. Officials aim to have 30% of the nation participating in J-CSOC by the end of this year.</p> <p>The command center was founded in 2021, initially with South Dakota and Montana as members alongside North Dakota. A spokesperson with the North Dakota Information Technology Department declined to comment on the membership of J-CSOC, citing security concerns.</p> <p>Officials stressed the importance of states working together for rapid response. States that identify an active threat can quickly alert others to potentially limit the reach of a phishing attack, for example. “If one state is being attacked, the others will most likely be targeted next,” North Dakota’s Chief Information Security Officer Michael Gregg said in a statement.</p> <p>The North Dakota IT Department said that before the J-CSOC existed, there was no mechanism to facilitate direct state-to-state sharing of cyber threat intelligence. Currently, the Multi State Information Sharing and Analysis Center, which <a href="#">is a division</a> within the Center for Internet Security, says it acts as a “trusted cybersecurity partner” for more than 13,000 organizations including state and local governments, providing “incident response and remediation.”</p> <p>In a statement, Riley said the “defense posture of the entire country is being improved due to the actions of the J-CSOC.”</p>

HEADLINE	08/22 Criminals social engineer way to victims
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.malwarebytes.com/blog/news/2022/08/criminals-socially-engineer-their-way-to-bank-details-with-fake-arrest-warrants?web_view=true">https://www.malwarebytes.com/blog/news/2022/08/criminals-socially-engineer-their-way-to-bank-details-with-fake-arrest-warrants?web_view=true</a>
GIST	<p>When an organization experiences a massive data breach, it knows (at least) that it needs to inform the federal government about the cybersecurity incident, get law enforcement involved, and then inform its clients and affiliates. Seems simple enough, but this process, which countries from the West have been abiding by, is the result of countless breaches in the past, followed by a myriad of digital crimes that took advantage of those leaked and stolen data.</p> <p>Unfortunately, not all governments in the world are in the same boat when handling incidents of compromised data—something every country has been familiar with, along with its associated victims. And while some governments continue to deny the real-life impacts of such online incidents and lawmakers are still figuring out what to do, consumers are left to fend for themselves with no real help in sight from law enforcement.</p> <p>Such was the case of <a href="#">@TheVenusDarling</a>, a Twitter user in Malaysia. She was targeted by online scammers who used her personal details gleaned from an <a href="#">April 2022 data leak</a> that affected 22.5 million people.</p> <p>Note that Venus's case is just one of many. After she shared her experiences on Twitter, some came forward to tell a similar tale that, more than losing money, left them feeling traumatized for a long time. Without Venus's quick thinking and help from a cybersecurity pro, she would've been left in a far more difficult situation.</p> <p><b>Scammers put victims in a swirl of "too much"</b> It began with a phone call.</p> <p>The caller, a female who was purportedly working for the <a href="#">Inland Revenue Board of Malaysia (IRBM)</a>, an agency responsible for collecting taxes, said that "Venus" owed at least RM50,000 (\$11,000) in arrears for a business created under her name.</p> <p>"The caller seemed authoritative and convincing and even supplied a reference number," <a href="#">said Munira Mustafa</a>, the expert who helped Venus in her case. It didn't stop here. In further attempts to sell the legitimacy of the call and the integrity of the person on the other end of the line, the caller connected Venus to a "police inspector" (PI), who then instructed her to hang up and Google the number of the local police headquarters. She then received a call from a number matching the number she had just searched.</p> <p>Mustaffa, who founded the <a href="#">Chasseur Group</a> and serves as its executive director and principal analyst, <a href="#">is known</a> in counter-terrorism and organized crime circles. <a href="#">In her post</a>, she broke down the scam into four phases, reflecting the scammers' intent in each stage: Dismay, Isolate, Overwhelm, and Intimidate.</p> <p>The so-called PI proceeded to inform Venus that there was an arrest warrant for her because her ATM card was linked to money laundering and fraud activities <b>[Dismay]</b>. He then passed the call to a "high-ranking officer" (HRO), who instructed her to move to a quieter place to ensure the call's privacy <b>[Isolate]</b>. The HRO then sent Venus a copy of the purported arrest warrant, containing her legitimate details, via WhatsApp <b>[Overwhelm]</b>. He also told her to download and install an APK file he sent via the messaging app to aid them in their investigation.</p> <p>Venus did what she was instructed, including filling out the form in the app. When she was about to enter her bank account PIN, she remembered she wasn't supposed to share it with anyone. She then realized she was about to be scammed. Sensing her hesitation, the HRO began shouting to further freak her out into giving up the PIN <b>[Intimidate]</b>.</p> <p>She then ended the call, uninstalled the app, and sought Mustafa's help.</p>



"Unfortunately, in this instance, uninstalling the app is not sufficient," Mustaffa said. "Even with the application deleted, we had to assume that the device remained infected with malware. Hitting reset would have been the recommended option; however, that would result in data loss—an outcome not many are willing to go for."

#### **Scammers know what people don't**

If this scam is not spotlighted and people are not educated, many more will continue to fall for this campaign. Scammers find success in what they do because not only do they have the tools to take advantage of anything ill that happens to people—they know what people know and what they don't.

In this case, they know that citizens are largely unaware of government processes. And while the IRBM and law enforcement have social media presence and do inform their followers of scams, it's not enough.

"[T]he general populace must be properly informed about the government's procedures and standards," Mustaffa said. "And in order to do this, it is vital to enhance the accessibility, clarity, and transparency of information that is already widely available."

Getting familiar with the scam is also a big way to prevent it.

A scam is a scam, regardless of origin. If it proves lucrative, many will copy it. It's only time before online criminals adopt this tactic and begin their social engineering campaign against unwary citizens.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Renowned hacker is Twitter whistleblower</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.vice.com/en/article/v3p3vj/mudge-twitter-whistleblower-massive-security-issues">https://www.vice.com/en/article/v3p3vj/mudge-twitter-whistleblower-massive-security-issues</a>
GIST	<p>Twitter's former head of security has now turned whistleblower and alleged in multiple media interviews and documents provided to Congress and law enforcement agencies that the social media giant has a slew of serious cybersecurity problems. These issues include insider threats, where malicious employees leverage their data access for their own benefit, sometimes to spy or harass, were virtually unmonitored, and that Twitter did not take corrective actions even when informed of abuses.</p> <p>The whistleblower is Peiter Zatkó, an infamous and highly respected hacker also known as "Mudge," who has acted as a bridge between the hacking community and government for decades. Zatkó has previously testified in front of Congress and went on to work for DARPA.</p> <p>"During Mudge's employment, he uncovered extreme, egregious deficiencies by Twitter in every area of his mandate including (as described in detail below) user privacy, digital and physical security, and platform integrity/content moderation," a document written by the group Whistleblower Aid, which is representing Mudge, reads. Because of the multiple issues, Mudge feared that Twitter "could suffer an Equifax-level hack," <a href="#">the document, a copy of which was disclosed to Congress, adds.</a></p> <p>The document says Mudge found numerous privacy issues, including misuse of vast internal datasets; mishandling of personally identifiable information, including marketing campaigns based on user email addresses and phone numbers which were designated for security purposes (in 2019, Twitter <a href="#">said it used phone numbers for advertising purposes</a> that was supposed to be only used as a means of two-factor authentication).</p> <p>Mudge also said that more than 50 percent of Twitter's 500,000 data center servers were running non-compliant operating systems or kernels, which are the heart of an operating system and are especially important to keep up to date. Many of those were unable to support encryption at rest, which can protect data if it was accessed by a third party. More than 30 percent of employee computers had disabled software and security updates, the document continues.</p> <p>For insider threats specifically, the document says that they were "virtually unmonitored, and when found the company did not take corrective actions."</p>



[Insider threats are something](#) that all [social media companies have to deal with](#), but Twitter especially has faced high profile cases of employees abusing their access to user data.. Starting in around 2014, Twitter employees looked up personal information on Saudi dissidents and provided this information to the Saudi government. This month, one of those people, [Ahmad Abouammo, was found guilty](#).

[The tools that those workers have access](#) to can also pose a serious security risk. Twitter hired Mudge after the catastrophic hack in 2020 in which teenagers managed to compromise some of the most high profile accounts on the platform by abusing access to an internal Twitter management tool.

[In its report, CNN said](#) that Mudge has provided information about Twitter to multiple U.S. agencies, including the SEC, FTC, and the Department of Justice.

“All my life, I’ve been about finding places that I can go, and make a difference,” Mudge said in the filmed interview with CNN.

John Tye, founder of Whistleblower Aid, told CNN in his own televised interview that “We are in touch with law enforcement agencies. They are taking this seriously.”

The document says that Mudge had prepared “comprehensive written materials” to present to Twitter’s Board about problems with the social network’s problems, but he was instructed not to. In January, Mudge started to document evidence of fraud, the document continues. The document claims that Twitter CEO Parag Agrawal then lied about Mudge’s efforts to address fraud on the platform, and fired Mudge a day later. After that, Twitter’s Chief Compliance Officer started to email Mudge on his personal Gmail account in an attempt to get more information about the fraud.

“Apparently, Twitter’s own compliance officers understood the gravity of a situation in which the CEO had deliberately misled the Board,” the document continues. Mudge then continued to work for at least 150 hours, unpaid, “to do his best to document the underlying facts about information security, and the fraud he had identified.”

A Twitter spokesperson told Motherboard in a statement that “Mr. Zatko was fired from his senior executive role at Twitter in January 2022 for ineffective leadership and poor performance. What we’ve seen so far is a false narrative about Twitter and our privacy and data security practices that is riddled with inconsistencies and inaccuracies and lacks important context. Mr. Zatko’s allegations and opportunistic timing appear designed to capture attention and inflict harm on Twitter, its customers and its shareholders. Security and privacy have long been company-wide priorities at Twitter and will continue to be.”

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## Terrorism, Extremism

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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Al-Shabab: Somalia Islamist militant group</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.dw.com/en/al-shabab-somalias-islamist-militant-group/a-62899544">https://www.dw.com/en/al-shabab-somalias-islamist-militant-group/a-62899544</a>
GIST	<p>The recent hotel siege by al-Shabab, during which more than 20 people were killed, has spotlighted one of Africa's deadliest insurgencies. But who is the group? And what does it seek to achieve?</p> <p>According to analysts, al-Ittihad al-Islami (AIAI, or "Unity of Islam"), a militant Salafi group, was the forerunner of al-Shabab and gave birth to many of its leaders back in the 1990s.</p> <p>Al-Shabab, which means "the Youth," aims to establish a strict interpretation of Shariah law across Somalia. It has previously carried out public stoning and amputations of suspected adulterers and thieves. In addition, the group prohibits shaving of beards for men and has banned entertainment through music and movies.</p>

A split within AIAI saw al-Shabab initially affiliate itself with the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) — a federation of regional and clan-based Islamic courts founded in southern Somalia in 2004 to bring order and stability after the collapse of Mohamed Siad Barre's government in 1991.

In June 2006, Al-Shabab and the ICU seized control of the capital, Mogadishu, fueling fears of a spillover into neighboring Ethiopia.

In December 2006, Ethiopia — a predominantly Christian Orthodox country — sent troops to Somalia and ousted the ICU to thwart the terror threat.

### **Al-Shabab's radicalization**

Many analysts believe that Ethiopia's military intervention radicalized al-Shabab. However, Ethiopia's government claimed the operation was necessary and that the US and the African Union supported the mission.

Pushed south, al-Shabab took a more extreme ideological stance than the ICU, endorsing a fundamentalist version of Islam.

Between 2006-2008, al-Shabab recruited thousands of fighters to destabilize Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG).

During this time, the insurgent group established ties with Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network.

### **Deadly ambushes**

It began a [bombing and attack campaign](#) against Somalia's TFG and Ethiopian forces.

The group's indiscriminate attacks targeted civilians, journalists and international aid workers.

It also staged deadly ambushes on the African Union peacekeeping forces (AMISOM), which the UN Security Council authorized in February 2007.

[The US killed](#) two of al-Shabab's former leaders — Ahmed Abdi Godane in 2014 and Aden Hashi Farah Ayro in 2008— but their deaths have had little effect on the insurgency.

Al-Shabab leader Mukhtar Robow, also known as Abu Mansur, later defected from the group citing ideological differences. However, in 2022, [Somalia appointed Robow](#) as religion minister.

### **Designated a terrorist group**

In February 2008, the US State Department labeled al-Shabab a foreign terrorist organization.

The leadership of al-Shabab officially pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda in 2012.

Al-Shabab launched its first attack outside of Somalia in 2010, killing 74 people in Uganda's capital, Kampala.

In 2013, the militant group claimed responsibility for an attack on a shopping mall in Nairobi, Kenya, that killed 67 people. In 2015, al-Shabab attacked students at a university in Garissa, killing 148 people.

Al Shabab regularly carries out attacks in Somalia despite being weakened by the counterterrorism efforts of the AU-led peacekeeping mission.

In October 2017, Mogadishu suffered one of its worst terrorist attacks when truck bombings killed more than 500 people. Authorities blamed al-Shabab though the group never claimed responsibility.

### **Sources of revenue**

	<p>Experts say al-Shabab has profited from various revenue sources, including by extorting businesses, farmers and aid organizations.</p> <p>Despite a UN ban on Somali charcoal exports since 2012, al-Shabab has built up a large racketeering operation, with checkpoint taxation on illicitly traded charcoal bringing in millions of dollars annually.</p> <p>The group also makes money by smuggling contraband sugar across the Kenyan border.</p> <p>According to the UN, al-Shabab spent more than \$21 million (€21 million) in 2019 on fighters, weapons and intelligence, and the group enjoyed significant budgetary surpluses.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/24 FBI, DHS warn: potential copycat attacks</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cbsnews.com/news/fbi-dhs-bulletin-buffalo-shooter-potential-racially-motivated-copycat-attacks/">https://www.cbsnews.com/news/fbi-dhs-bulletin-buffalo-shooter-potential-racially-motivated-copycat-attacks/</a>
GIST	<p>The government on Tuesday urged law enforcement partners nationwide to "remain vigilant" and watch for indicators of potential copycat attacks following the widespread dissemination of over 700 pages written by the 19-year-old suspect who allegedly <a href="#">opened fire</a> and <a href="#">killed 10 people</a> in a supermarket located in a predominantly Black neighborhood in Buffalo, New York, last May.</p> <p>The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), FBI and the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) assessed that a 180-page manifesto and 672-page online diary written by the alleged gunman and "intended to serve as a manual for future attackers" will "likely enhance the capabilities of potential mass casualty shooters who may be inspired by this attack."</p> <p>Investigators say the Buffalo suspect had invited several individuals to view his private online diary minutes prior to the attack "to assist in the dissemination of his materials" that outline "pre-attack training with gear, modification of weapons, and extensive target selection research," the memo stated.</p> <p>Prosecutors have asserted that the alleged gunman, <a href="#">who they say espoused</a> white supremacist beliefs, "committed the offense after substantial planning and premeditation to commit an act of terrorism." A federal grand jury has <a href="#">indicted him</a> on 27 charges, including 14 alleged federal hate crimes and 13 weapons charges. If convicted, he faces a maximum sentence of life in prison or the death penalty. Eleven of the 13 individuals shot at the store on May 14, 2022 were Black.</p> <p>According to the bulletin, obtained by CBS News, detailed descriptions of the alleged gunman's tactics, techniques and procedures will "contribute to the volume of violent extremist content readily available online."</p> <p>Federal law enforcement warned that "lone offenders" may be particularly susceptible to the materials, with those "espousing a belief in the superiority of the white race ... most likely to utilize these tactics due to their shared ideology and the demonstrated history of [racially motivated violent extremists] citing inspiration from previous attackers."</p> <p>"We remain alert to the potential use of these [tactics, techniques and procedures] in copycat attacks due to the history of some violent extremists finding ideological inspiration and leveraging tactical guidance from perpetrators of high-profile attacks," the bulletin read.</p> <p>Federal law enforcement noted that online writings and manifestos are created and shared by extremist actors "across borders," underscoring the transnational nature of the threat.</p> <p>The memo revealed that the Buffalo suspect was inspired by the <a href="#">2019 attack in Christchurch, New Zealand</a> that left 50 people dead. The live-streamed attack reportedly influenced at least two fatal U.S. attacks in 2019: shootings in <a href="#">El Paso, Texas</a>, and <a href="#">Poway, California</a>.</p> <p>Federal law enforcement has encouraged local authorities to appeal for the assistance of community members and technology companies that spot potential signs of inspired attacks, including "increased</p>

circulation of the attacker's guidance materials in online spaces commonly associated with or used by some violent extremists to espouse their beliefs."

The DHS, FBI and NCTC are aware of "several pages" of written instructions that describe how to modify an AR-15 to hold more rounds of ammunition and directs readers on where to obtain materials to alter weapons.

In addition to gear modification, the manifesto and diary analyze different armor and weapons employed in attacks to optimize personal safety, defense and mobility of the shooter.

Investigators found the alleged attacker discussed tailoring targets to areas with stricter gun laws to "decrease resistance from armed civilians" as well as improvements to live streaming, according to the bulletin.

The DHS, FBI and NCTC have urged law enforcement, private sector partners, and the general public [to "promptly report suspicious activities"](#) potentially related to violent extremist activity, including indications of possible online radicalization to violence and mobilization for attacks."

Federal law enforcement officials warn that "it is difficult to assess specific indicators that are indicative of US-based violent extremists' intent to commit violence at home or abroad" due in part to the "personal nature" of radicalization and calls to violence.

But authorities have identified red flags including "explicit discussion and/or praise of the Buffalo attacker's specific [tactics] in online spaces" and "unusual purchase of military-style tactical equipment."

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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Canada spy agency: extremism 'safe haven'</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://globalnews.ca/news/9077272/csis-afghanistan-taliban-extremist-safe-haven/">https://globalnews.ca/news/9077272/csis-afghanistan-taliban-extremist-safe-haven/</a>
GIST	<p>Canada's domestic spy agency warned the government in October that the <a href="#">Taliban's</a> return to power in <a href="#">Afghanistan</a> could increase the risk of <a href="#">religiously motivated extremism</a> in Canada, documents reviewed by Global News suggest.</p> <p>Additional newly released documents also suggest Canadian government officials were caught off guard by the speed of the Taliban's takeover last summer, although the terrorist organization's resurgence was seen as a foregone conclusion by Canadian intelligence officials as early as May 2021.</p> <p>"Should Western forces withdraw (from Afghanistan), the Taliban would likely decisively defeat the (Afghan security forces) and capture most major urban areas, and re-establish Taliban control over most of Afghanistan," read a briefing note for then-defence minister Harjit Sajjan, prepared by Canadian military intelligence.</p> <p>The Taliban would go on to seize Kabul, the Afghan capital, three months later on Aug. 15, 2021. The speed of the Afghan government's collapse surprised Western intelligence and defence officials, including in Canada.</p> <p>In October, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) warned Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino that Afghanistan could become a hotbed for extremist organizing, and that so-called "extremist travellers" returning to Canada could increase the risk of religiously motivated extremism domestically.</p> <p>"The evolving situation in Afghanistan and (the) take-over by the Taliban, a listed terrorist entity, has potentially created a safe haven and base for other extremist organizations, as well as a destination for Canadian extremist travellers," the briefing document reads.</p>

In a letter to Mendicino, CSIS Director David Vigneault warned that “religiously motivated violent extremism” remains a concern for Canadian officials, “especially with the Taliban regaining control in Afghanistan and the continued prospect of returning extremist travellers.”

### **Taliban’s return will 'destabilize' region**

The briefing, which is partially censored, said the Taliban’s return to power will “destabilize security in the region” and would “likely attract other insurgent groups.”

Less than ten months after Vigneault’s warning, U.S. President Joe Biden announced that America had killed al-Qaida leader [Ayman al-Zawahiri with a drone strike](#) in Kabul. Biden hailed the killing as justice for the September 11, 2001, attack on New York City, in which al-Zawahiri played a central planning role along with Osama bin Laden.

A total of 158 Canadian soldiers died during the Afghan war, with thousands of Canadian Forces members wounded since the first troop deployments in 2002. Canada formally ended its military mission in Afghanistan in 2014.

The May 2021 military intelligence documents, which were obtained by Global News under access to information laws, came at a time of some uncertainty about the continued presence of foreign troops in Afghanistan.

At the time, the U.S. and its NATO allies had until May 1, 2021, to withdraw their troops from the country — a condition of a peace deal concluded in February 2020 between the Trump administration and Taliban officials.

In its assessment, the Canadian military warned that a complete troop drawdown by May 1 would have “severe security implications” for Afghanistan, and suggested that “the Taliban would likely realize a complete military victory over the Afghan government.”

U.S. President Joe Biden later postponed the exit of his country’s 2,500 remaining troops until Sept. 11, 2021, with NATO countries following suit.

Canadian military officials cautioned that the Taliban and other non-state actors, including the Haqqani Network and al-Qaida, would likely target foreign forces in an effort to pressure them to withdraw. Over the next few months, the Taliban offensive would force Canada to hasten the exit of personnel from Afghanistan.

### **'Persistent' threat of religiously motivated extremism**

Religiously motivated extremism inspired by groups like Daesh or al-Qaida has taken a back seat in Canada’s national security discourse due to the rise of what CSIS calls “ideologically motivated violent extremism” (IMVE). That includes far-right and white supremacist groups that have proliferated and gained prominence in Canada, the United States and Europe over the last decade.

But the October 2021 CSIS briefing makes clear that the agency still views religiously motivated extremism as a “persistent” threat to Canada’s national security, including the threat of extremists gaining training and resources while fighting abroad and then returning to Canada. So-called “lone wolf” attacks, where a person is motivated to violence largely in isolation, are also a concern for the agency.

“Similar to (ideologically motivated) actors, there is an increasingly robust online (religious extremist) presence able to inspire attacks, which can be planned and executed with little warning,” the document reads.

“While the threat of (extremist travellers) is not exclusive to the (religiously motivated extremism) milieu, there are Canadians with a range of training and experience acquired while abroad that make them an especially dangerous threat to national security, particularly if they return to Canada.”

It wasn't the first time CSIS warned the government about the situation in Afghanistan. In May 2019, CSIS published a report that suggested if the U.S. withdrew before a final agreement on a transitional government was concluded, "the government of Afghanistan could collapse quickly."

The report described the government in Kabul as "weak," riven with "endemic corruption, factionalism and economic failure."

Despite the earlier warnings, Canadian officials appeared to be taken aback by the speed of the Taliban's offensive. By July 2021, David Morrison, then Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's foreign and defence policy advisor, told Trudeau that the situation on the ground had "deteriorated significantly" after the accelerated U.S. withdrawal.

"The Afghan government is in a far more precarious state than it was even a month ago and there is now speculation that it could fall in a matter of months," the memo to Trudeau read.

The Taliban took control of the presidential palace in Kabul just three weeks later, when then-president Ashraf Ghani fled the country.

Trudeau was candid last summer about the challenges that Canada faced in its evacuation efforts, describing the situation as "extremely fluid."

"The Taliban has taken control of approaches to the airport, which is making it extremely difficult for people to get to the airport in order to get out," Trudeau told reporters at a campaign stop on Aug. 17 in Markham, Ont.

Just days later, he defended his government's response to the crisis, including evacuation efforts in Kabul.

"The situation in Afghanistan on the ground has gotten worse, much more quickly than anyone expected," he said. "And that's why we are redoubling our efforts to be there to do that work."

Canada's evacuation mission in Kabul ultimately came to an end on Aug. 26, 2021.

In a 2021 year-end interview with Global News' Ottawa bureau chief Mercedes Stephenson, Trudeau conceded that his government's efforts weren't enough to "stave off the humanitarian tragedy" of the Taliban's takeover.

"We knew it was coming," he said. "We didn't know it was going to be this fast. Nobody knew it was going to be this fast."

The Liberal government has been under pressure to speed up their pledge of resettling 40,000 Afghan refugees, including many who worked with the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan. According to the [latest figures from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada \(IRCC\)](#), a total of 17,590 have arrived in Canada since the Taliban's takeover.

That number includes 7,310 Afghans who previously assisted the Canadian government, fewer than half of the 15,265 who have applied.

In a statement, CSIS said the agency works closely with the RCMP to inform possible criminal investigations into Canadian "extremist travellers" who return to Canada and are believed to pose a threat to national security.

"The mobilization of Canadians abroad to participate in armed conflict is neither new, nor an aberration, nor a threat emanating exclusively from religiously motivated violent extremist. Canadians



	<p>with a range of training and experience acquired while abroad makes them a threat to national security,” wrote CSIS spokesperson Brandon Champagne in a statement to Global News.</p> <p>Champagne added investigating religiously motivated extremism remains a “high priority” for the agency.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 US airstrikes militia-held areas east Syria</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/us-airstrikes-target-militia-controlled-areas-east-syria-88770784">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/us-airstrikes-target-militia-controlled-areas-east-syria-88770784</a>
GIST	<p>BEIRUT -- The U.S. military said early Wednesday it carried out airstrikes in eastern Syria that targeted areas used by militias backed by Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard.</p> <p>There was no immediate acknowledgment by Syria's state-run media of the strikes hitting Deir Ez-Zor. Iran as well did not acknowledge the attack.</p> <p>Opposition war monitor the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights and activist collective Deir Ezzor 24 said the airstrikes targeted the Ayash Camp run by the Fatimiyoun group made up of Shiite fighters from Afghanistan. The war monitor reported that at least six Syrian and foreign militants were killed in the airstrikes.</p> <p>The U.S. military's Central Command said the strikes “took proportionate, deliberate action intended to limit the risk of escalation and minimize the risk of casualties.” It did not identify the targets, nor offer any casualty figures from the strikes, which the military said came at the orders of President <a href="#">Joe Biden</a>.</p> <p>“Today’s strikes were necessary to protect and defend U.S. personnel,” Central Command spokesman Col. Joe Buccino said in a statement.</p> <p>The colonel added the attack was in response to an Aug. 15 attack targeting U.S. forces. That attack saw drones allegedly launched by Iranian-backed militias target the al-Tanf Garrison used by American forces. U.S. Central Command described the assault as causing “zero casualties and no damage” at the time.</p> <p>Deir Ez-Zor is a strategic province that borders <a href="#">Iraq</a> and contains oil fields. Iran-backed militia groups and Syrian forces control the area and have often been the target of Israeli war planes in previous strikes.</p> <p>U.S. forces entered Syria in 2015, backing allied forces in their fight against the Islamic State group.</p>
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## Suspicious, Unusual

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HEADLINE	<b>08/24 EU face 3 more drier, warmer months?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://apnews.com/article/france-droughts-da21d2845116f2ca2665dabe6847a7b0">https://apnews.com/article/france-droughts-da21d2845116f2ca2665dabe6847a7b0</a>
GIST	<p>BRUSSELS (AP) — Parts of the European Union could face three more months of warmer and drier conditions as Europe weathers a major drought that has fueled forest fires, dried up rivers and devastated crops, the 27-nation bloc’s Earth observation program is warning in a report.</p> <p>“Warmer and drier than usual conditions are likely to occur in the western Euro-Mediterranean region in the coming months till November 2022,” notably in Spain and Portugal, the EU’s Copernicus program said in a <a href="#">report for the month of August</a>.</p> <p>Almost half of the 27-nation EU is under drought warning, with conditions worsening in Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and Spain. The report also noted rising drought hazards outside the EU, in Britain, Serbia, Ukraine and Moldova.</p>



Copernicus said that a shortage of rain and a sequence of heatwaves since May has led to the dry conditions and lower river levels. That in turn has hit the energy sector, depriving hydroelectric and other power plants of their prime source of energy and cooling liquid.

Water shortages and heat stress are also reducing European crop yields, with maize, soybeans, and sunflowers hardest hit. Recent rainfall in August has helped some regions, but crops in other areas have been battered by thunderstorms.

The report comes amid what experts say could be the continent's worst drought in 500 years. Little significant rainfall has been recorded for almost two months, but Europe isn't alone. Drought conditions are also reported in East Africa, the western United States and northern Mexico.

Climate is exacerbating conditions as hotter temperatures speed up evaporation, thirsty plants take in more moisture and reduced snowfall in the winter limits supplies of fresh water available for irrigation in the summer.

In Italy, authorities managing the northern Po river have put the country's longest waterway on the highest level of drought severity alert. The parched conditions have already caused billions of euros in losses to farmers who rely on it to irrigate fields and rice paddies.

More than 100 municipalities in France have water supply issues and drinking water is delivered by truck. More than 60 French departments are at the highest drought warning level of "crisis." Supplies in Spain's Andalusia and Extremadura regions are less than a third of normal, the report said.

Low water levels on the Rhine River have seen Germany's main industry lobby group warn that factories may have to cut production or halt it completely. The river's plunging water levels are also hitting coal and oil transport in the Netherlands.

The Danube – Europe's second-longest river, stretching from Germany's Black Forest to the Black Sea in eastern Romania – has dropped to one of the lowest levels recorded in the past century.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 WA, tribes combat invasive green crabs</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/tech/science/environment/wdfw-tribes-invasive-crabs/281-ec71a9fe-381c-4f3b-a9f8-70536b39b902">https://www.king5.com/article/tech/science/environment/wdfw-tribes-invasive-crabs/281-ec71a9fe-381c-4f3b-a9f8-70536b39b902</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON, USA — A number of agencies, tribes and groups across Washington state are working to limit the growth of European green crab populations. Scientists say the invasive species can consume shellfish and other native marine life, and destroy habitats that much of the food web relies on.</p> <p>The most recent <a href="#">update</a> by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) said since the beginning of the year, more than 138,000 crabs have been trapped.</p> <p>Along with the Washington Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Washington Sea Grant, WDFW said shellfish growers, tribes and other entities have played crucial roles in crab removal.</p> <p>Allen Pleus, European Green Crab Incident Commander for WDFW, said Washington is still early enough in the phases of invasion that it is possible to make a significant dent in populations.</p> <p>"We have a really unique opportunity to hit these hard and try to manage them," Pleus said.</p> <p>Pleus said the crabs first arrived on the West Coast in 1998, but initial populations appeared to die out. Over the past three to four years, the state has seen a resurgence, mostly on the coast, with Lummi Sea</p>

	<p>Pond a major area of concern. In December, the Lummi Nation shared that <a href="#">it had seen populations there grow</a> from the tens in 2019, to the hundreds in 2020 and thousands in 2021.</p> <p>The Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribe said it, too, is dealing with a large influx of the crabs and will use some federal funding to trap tens of thousands this year.</p> <p>"We're not seeing a let-up on any of the numbers we're trapping and there's no population reduction we've seen anywhere," Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribe Director of Natural Resources Larissa Pfleeger-Ritzman said.</p> <p>WDFW said so far, infestations have been detected in Willapa Bay, Grays Harbor, Makah Bay and Lummi Bay; they remain low across other areas of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, San Juan Islands, Bellingham and Padilla bays.</p> <p>WDFW said it has not yet confirmed the crabs in the Salish Sea south of northern Hood Canal and Marrowstone Island in Admiralty Inlet.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Congress admits: not all UFOs 'man-made'</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.vice.com/en/article/3adadb/congress-admits-ufos-not-man-made-says-threats-increasing-exponentially">https://www.vice.com/en/article/3adadb/congress-admits-ufos-not-man-made-says-threats-increasing-exponentially</a>
GIST	<p>After years of revelations about strange lights in the sky, first hand reports from <a href="#">Navy pilots</a> about UFOs, and <a href="#">governmental investigations</a>, Congress seems to have admitted something startling in print: it doesn't believe all UFOs are "man-made."</p> <p>Buried deep in <a href="#">a report</a> that's an addendum to the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023, a budget that governs America's clandestine services, Congress made two startling claims. The first is that "cross-domain transmedium threats to the United States national security are expanding exponentially." The second is that it wants to distinguish between UFOs that are human in origin and those that are not: "Temporary nonattributed objects, or those that are positively identified as man-made after analysis, will be passed to appropriate offices and should not be considered under the definition as unidentified aerospace-undersea phenomena," the document states.</p> <p>The admission is stunning chiefly because, as more information about the U.S. government's study of UFOs has become public, many politicians have stopped just short of claiming the unidentified objects were extraterrestrial or extradimensional in origin. The standard line is typically that, if UFOs exist, then they're likely advanced—although human-made—vehicles. Obama refused to confirm the existence of aliens but did say that people have seen a lot of strange stuff in the sky lately when <a href="#">asked directly</a> on <i>The Late Show with James Corden</i>, for example. But now Congress seems to want to specifically distinguish between objects that are "man-made" and those that are not.</p> <p>A "cross-domain transmedium" threat is one that, by the Pentagon's definition, can move from water to air to space in ways we don't understand. In July, the Pentagon announced it was opening the <a href="#">All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office</a> (AARO) to investigate these threats. The bill would reclassify Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (the government's term for UFOs) as Unidentified Aerospace-Undersea Phenomena and rename the Pentagon's office in line with the new designation. Last year, a <a href="#">leaked video</a> that was confirmed by the Pentagon as being authentic appeared to show a UFO seamlessly flying beneath the waves.</p> <p>Senator Marco Rubio, the vice chair of the Senate Select Committee overseeing intelligence that issued the report, has <a href="#">publicly said</a> he wants the UFOs to be aliens and not foreign weapons.</p> <p>A large question, of course, is why Congress is seemingly admitting this now, in public. After all, lawmakers are privy to classified information that the general public isn't. "It strains credulity to believe that lawmakers would include such extraordinary language in public legislation without compelling</p>

	<p>evidence,” Marik von Rennenkampff, an Obama-era DoD official, <a href="#">said in an op-ed</a> in <i>The Hill</i> about the budget. According to the op-ed, the comments <a href="#">were first noticed</a> by UFO researcher Douglas Johnson.</p> <p>"This implies that members of the Senate Intelligence Committee believe (on a unanimous, bipartisan basis) that some UFOs have non-human origins," von Rennenkampff continued. "After all, why would Congress establish and task a powerful new office with investigating non-'man-made' UFOs if such objects did not exist?"</p> <p>"Make no mistake: One branch of the American government implying that UFOs have non-human origins is an explosive development."</p> <p>A bipartisan group of U.S. legislators has long put pressure on the Pentagon to figure out what the strange lights are that Americans are seeing in the sky. In 2021, the DoD <a href="#">issued a report</a> detailing more than 100 sightings that it investigated. It said some of what it studied could not be explained with current scientific models and asked for more time and money to study the phenomenon. Congress has given it to them and now it's asking the Pentagon to focus only on those objects that haven't been designed by human hands.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Hit by five 1,000-yr rain events in 5 weeks</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2022/08/23/flood-united-states-climate-explainer/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2022/08/23/flood-united-states-climate-explainer/</a>
GIST	<p>Five weeks. Five instances of 1,000-year rain events. If it seems like the weather across the Lower 48 as of late has been bonkers, you're not imagining things. It's been a maelstrom of weather extremes, a seesaw fluctuating wildly from significantly dry to record wet conditions.</p> <p>Parts of the United States, especially in the West, are gripped by an inveterate and devastating drought — yet many drought-stricken areas have experienced rare and extreme flooding over the summer, bringing fiercely different precipitation extremes to the region in a matter of hours.</p> <p>On Monday, parts of the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex awoke to torrential downpours that dropped totals of 10 to 16 inches, bringing calamitous impacts and prompting widespread water rescues. Entire neighborhoods near the suburb of Mesquite were left beneath water, and <a href="#">at least one person</a> died.</p> <p>What happened in the Dallas area came after the city and 29 percent of the state were gripped in a top-tier “exceptional” drought that impacted crops and drove water shortages. Some farmers were forced to thin their herds in a process called “culling,” according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. DFW International Airport was 11.11 inches behind for rainfall since Jan. 1.</p> <p>Then Monday became the airport's wettest calendar day on record.</p> <p>The extreme rainfall in Dallas was a “1,000-year rain event,” an episode of flooding that has just a 0.1 percent probability of happening in any given year. It joins the company of 1,000-year rain events that struck Kentucky, St. Louis, eastern Illinois and Death Valley, Calif., since the end of July — all of which were experiencing abnormally dry conditions or in a severe drought beforehand.</p> <p>Droughts can often make flooding worse. Droughts kill plants and leaves the ground bare, reducing soil absorption. They also harden top soils, which makes it easier for water to run off. The extremely dry ground, combined with the rapid rainfall, can trigger widespread flooding.</p> <p>While no single weather event is caused by mankind's influence on the atmosphere, the weather facing the nation bears the fingerprint of a warming world. While it seems contradictory, both drought and flooding are closely tied to human-driven warming and are altering our environment and how we interact with it. We are witnessing firsthand the effects of ordinary weather events — a product of chaotic randomness and natural variability — supercharged by climate change.</p>

### What is a 1,000-year rain event?

We haven't been taking measurements for 1,000 years, so how can we know what constitutes a 1,000-year rain event? It comes from constructing what's called a probability distribution, and requires some basic grade-school statistics.

Using an available data set of, say, 100 years or so, we can plot the frequency of rain events of varying magnitudes for a given time window. Once that's done, we can note the shape of whatever distribution results. Think back to the bell curve in math class — most of the data is clumped around the middle, with more extreme events on the edges as frequency trails off. Finding the likelihood of an extreme weather event is similar.

From there, meteorologists and statisticians extract “recurrence intervals,” or the average frequency with which a given extreme event should occur. That means a 1,000-year rain event has an 0.1 percent chance of happening in any given year. A 100-year event would have a 1 percent chance, and so on.

Nowadays, however, our climate is evolving rapidly enough that previously-defined recurrence intervals based on historic data may no longer apply. Michael Mann, a climate scientist at Pennsylvania State University, explained that today's climate is making some of these reference points relics of the past.

“Recurrence intervals start to lose their meaning for ‘nonstationary’ systems,” he wrote, “in this case because there is a trend toward greater extremes in a warming climate.”

In a [2017 paper](#), he found the return period of a 7.4-foot storm surge flood in New York City had decreased from once every 500 years in preindustrial times to once every 25 years since. It could become a once-per-five-year event toward the middle of the century. Precipitation extremes follow a similar trend.

### Five 1,000-year rain events in five weeks

It's normal that somewhere will see a 1,000-year rain each year. It'd be abnormal if that wasn't the case. But five in five weeks is extreme, and hints at an overarching trend.

- **On the morning of July 26, [St. Louis awoke](#)** to historic flooding in the city. A staggering 7.87 inches of rain fell in six hours during the morning commute, inundating vehicles and prompting hundreds of water rescues. It came from training thunderstorms, or storms moving along a stalled frontal boundary. A total of 8.64 inches was logged for the day, becoming St. Louis's wettest day on record. It crushed the previous record of 5.59 inches on May 16, 1995, by a wide margin; records date back to 1931. Some places west of the city received close to 13 inches.
- **On July 27**, rains began in eastern Kentucky north of Hazard and quickly turned fatal. Rainfall rates topping 2 inches per hour contributed to rapid rises on area rivers, including the North Fork of the [Kentucky](#) River at Whitesburg, which rose 11 feet in five hours. That was six feet above the previous record. The water probably kept rising, but the sensor was washed away. It was another 1,000-year rain event that tragically killed 38 people.
- **On the night of Aug. 1**, training thunderstorms in eastern Illinois dumped 8 to 13 inches of rain in about 12 hours near the town of Effingham. Fortunately the landscape was able to handle the rainfall, but there were some reports of flash flooding.
- **On Aug. 5**, heavy storms dumped 1.46 inches of rain on Death Valley, Calif. That doesn't sound like much, but it's just 0.01 inches shy of the all-time daily record. Given the rapidity with which it fell, it was classified as a 1,000-year rain event. Death Valley averages just 0.11 inches of rain in August; 1.46 inches is equivalent to nine months' worth of rainfall. According to the Park Service, the flooding destroyed a water system that serves numerous park residences and facilities. A number of vehicles were also damaged.
- **On Aug. 22**, moisture pooling on a stalled frontal boundary over Dallas translated to training thunderstorms. DFW International Airport saw both its wettest day and wettest hour on record. Flash flood warnings were issued across the city.

All five events stemmed from stationary fronts and anomalously-humid air masses.

### The fingerprint of climate change

It's well-established that a warmer world is a wetter world. That's due to something called the Clausius-Clapeyron relation. For every degree Fahrenheit the air temperature warms, the air can hold about 4 percent more water. That's leading to higher humidity and heat indexes — which can be taxing on the human body — but is also manifesting in precipitation extremes.

It's not noticeable in the day-to-day, but let's consider that we take a storm in preindustrial times and copy it into today's environment. With about 1.8 degrees of warming since preindustrial times, the air would have a 7 to 8 percent greater capacity to store and transport moisture.

In a water-loaded environment like a thunderstorm complex or tropical system, you might think that would mean 7 or 8 percent more rainfall. But that's where things get murky. Because an air mass is being constantly replenished and fed into these storms, that can quickly lead to a 10 or 20 percent increase in precipitation totals.

We're seeing this quite prominently in rainfall rates, meaning the wetter atmosphere is leading to heavier instantaneous downpours. Dallas, for example, saw its highest one-hour total on record between 1 and 2 a.m. on Monday, with 3.01 inches coming down. Records at DFW International extend back to 1953, but seven of the top 10 wettest one-hour totals have occurred in the 2000s.

There's already been a 24 percent spike in the frequency of top 1 percent rainfall events in Texas [since the dawn of the 20th century](#). That trend is echoed across the country and world.

#### **The bottom line**

No weather is caused by climate change. Weather will always be weather. But the signature of a warming world is now perceptible every day in the conditions we regularly face.

For many people, the concept of a changing climate might seem distant and removed — a two-millimeter rise in sea levels a year or a subtle uptick in global temperatures may appear inconsequential. But human influence is affecting the dynamics of weather systems, the periodicity of the jet stream and the moisture-holding capacity of the atmosphere.

As is becoming evident in the Lower 48 and across the world, 1,000-year floods may happen a lot more than once every 1,000 years. "Unprecedented" may, in fact, become precededent. And the uptick in extremes and changing conditions means our environment is evolving faster than our infrastructure. That's the crux of the problem.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/24 China summer heat wave breaking records</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/08/24/china-drought-heat-wave-climate-change/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/08/24/china-drought-heat-wave-climate-change/</a>
GIST	<p>The unprecedented <a href="#">heat wave</a> that has engulfed China this summer has dried up rivers, wilted crops and sparked forest fires. It has grounded ships, caused hydropower shortages and forced major cities to dim lights. Receding waters have revealed long-submerged ancient <a href="#">bridges</a> and <a href="#">Buddhist statues</a>.</p> <p>Among the many striking images is a pattern left in the mud flats around Poyang Lake, usually the largest body of freshwater in the country, which has shrunk by more than two-thirds. Chinese media dubbed the branchlike patterns carved by trickling waters "Earth tree," calling its appearance a warning about a dangerous future of intensifying extreme weather.</p> <p>At 73 days and counting, the relentless heat wave has easily surpassed the previous record of 62 days in 2013. All-time highs are being broken, often only to be rebroken days later. "This heat wave overtakes anything seen previously worldwide," <a href="#">tweeted climate historian</a> Maximiliano Herrera.</p> <p>Numerous fires have started across China over the past week amid high heat and drought, with particularly intense blazes near Chongqing, a city along the trickling Yangtze, in central parts of the country.</p>



Chongqing recorded low temperatures as high as 95 degrees in recent days, [record for daily minimums](#) in August.

Electricity shortages in regions reliant on a vast network of power-generating dams and reservoirs for energy also come as the Chinese government is debating how — and how fast — to transition away from reliance on coal-fired power to renewable sources.

The faltering supply of hydropower, which last year accounted for about 15 percent of China's total energy supply, has added urgency to government concern about ensuring sufficient power generation to meet rising consumption — a boon for coal power companies that account for about 60 percent of electricity production.

Chinese President Xi Jinping's plan for China's carbon dioxide emissions to peak before 2030 is spurring a massive rollout of wind and solar power. But China's government has also said that coal — a leading contributor to global greenhouse gases — in the near term will remain the mainstay of national energy production.

Power shortages create a prime opportunity for China's fossil fuel giants to secure their place in the nation's rapidly evolving energy structure, said Philip Andrews-Speed, a senior fellow at National University of Singapore's Energy Studies Institute.

“After this crisis, the coal lobby will be saying, ‘this is why you need to have more coal mines and more coal-fired power plants,’” he said. “As in Europe, the key is keeping the lights on and keeping the heating and the air conditioning going. That is the short-term priority.”

After Sichuan's hydropower output fell below half of its normal level, 67 coal-fired power plants in the province were “firing on all cylinders” to generate as much power as possible as part of China's emergency response to the power shortage, Chinese state media [reported on Tuesday](#).

Long before China was a leading producer and installer of solar and wind power, it prioritized expanded hydropower production with megaprojects like the Three Gorges Dam, as well as hundreds of smaller generators built across China's major rivers and their tributaries.

The scale of this investment means swaths of southwest China relies on hydropower for as much as than 80 percent of its electricity and transfers excess energy to eastern provinces. Energy-intensive industries have flocked to provinces like Sichuan to take advantage of easy access to cheap, plentiful and renewable power produced by local dams.

The prospect of reduced energy production from the usually wet southwest in future years could undermine the region's reliance on hydropower as a carbon-free power source. More-frequent droughts make hydropower an uncertain bet, Andrews-Speed said.

Sichuan's high reliance on hydropower means that it is hard for other energy sources to make up a shortage in power supply when needed, Lin Boqiang, dean of the China Institute for Energy Policy Studies at Xiamen University, [wrote in an article](#).

“If the frequency of extreme weather increases because of climate change, then the government must actively take responsive measures to diversify the energy structure and improve the electricity grid,” he said.

The concern about hydropower's reliability is a sharp reversal from the situation at the start of the summer when torrential rain filled Chinese dams and [raised hydropower generation](#).

Turmoil in global energy markets caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine has added to China's long-standing concerns about energy security. After power shortages late last year, the Chinese government

responded by ordering coal mines to expand output. As the rest of the world has shunned Russian oil and coal, China has imported record amounts of both.

Beijing's continued embrace of fossil fuels has drawn criticism from climate change activists that the world's largest greenhouse gas emitter is failing to transition away from coal fast enough to meet [international ambitions](#) to keep global average temperature rises to within 2 degrees Celsius over preindustrial levels.

Part of the problem for Chinese state planners is that energy use per capital in China remains below half of that of many industrialized nations, including the United States, and its total primary energy consumption is unlikely to peak for at least another decade.

Yet, the intensity of extreme weather events in recent years has drawn greater attention to the impact of climate change in China. Even though Beijing for many years has recognized the need to slow global warming, public discussion of the issue had been limited until only a couple of years ago.

[That is changing](#). As climate change moved up China's geopolitical agenda along with Beijing's desire to be seen as a global leader on the issue, dramatic scenes of flash floods in central China's Henan province last summer helped to raise awareness after more than 300 people were killed.

[Studies have found](#) that heat waves are increasing in intensity and duration in China, as well as delivering warmer temperatures at night because of human-induced climate change. The increase has been observed in both urban and rural locations. Heat waves are also starting earlier and ending later.

Official rhetoric, too, has shifted toward openly connecting extreme weather events to climatic shifts. Earlier this month, Chen Lijuan from the National Climate Center [told local media](#) that global warming meant heat waves were set to become a "new normal," where high temperatures would arrive earlier and last longer — in a trend that will become "ever more obvious in the future."

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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Extinction threat: 1-in-6 tree species</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2022/08/23/extinct-tree-species-sequoias/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2022/08/23/extinct-tree-species-sequoias/</a>
GIST	<p>The most endangered tree in the contiguous United States is most likely a battered old oak hidden deep in a Texas mountain range. Its trunk is scarred by a wildfire. Its limbs are weak from a fungal infection. Its habitat is imperiled by climate change. Scientists only realized the species still existed after stumbling upon the ailing specimen during an expedition this spring. And without swift action, researchers warn, <i>Quercus tardifolia</i> could truly disappear.</p> <p>The species is among some 100 U.S. trees staring down the barrel of extinction, according to a sweeping new assessment published Tuesday in the journal <i>Plants People Planet</i>.</p> <p>Amid an onslaught of invasive insects, a surge in deadly diseases and the all-encompassing peril of climate change, as many as 1 in 6 trees native to the Lower 48 states are in danger of being wiped out, the scientists say. The threatened list includes soaring coast redwoods, capacious American chestnuts, elegant black ash and gnarled whitebark pine.</p> <p>Yet only eight tree species are federally recognized as endangered or threatened. And 17 at-risk species aren't conserved in any botanic gardens or scientific collections – including <i>Quercus tardifolia</i>. If they die off in the wild, these trees will be gone for good.</p> <p>"It's easy to feel that gloom and doom because . . . the scope of the crisis is really, really great right now," said Murphy Westwood, vice president for science and conservation at the Morton Arboretum in Illinois and a lead author of the study. "We're losing species before they even get described."</p>



The new study is the first to list and assess the health of all 881 tree species native to the contiguous United States – an achievement in and of itself, Westwood said, because conservation research rarely focuses on plants.

She pointed to disparities in the International Union for the Conservation of Nature’s “Red List,” the preeminent global inventory for species’ conservation status. The list includes twice as many mammal species as members of the order Lamiales, which includes ash, teak and jacaranda trees – even though the latter group is nearly five times the size of the former.

“Plant blindness” – the human tendency to overlook the plants that surround us – means that fewer resources are devoted to the organisms that supply Earth’s oxygen, feed its animals and store more carbon than humanity will emit in 10 years. Until several years ago, scientists didn’t even know how many tree species existed (the correct number is 58,497).

“It’s this big swath of life that’s totally unstudied or understudied,” Westwood said.

Now a coalition of scientists lead by Botanic Gardens Conservation International is attempting to determine how many of those species are at risk of dying out. Westwood helped lead the U.S. effort.

In the United States, she found, more than two-thirds of species had never been assessed for their extinction risk. Others hadn’t been examined in decades, even as new illnesses and rising global temperatures imperiled their populations.

After five years poring over scientific journals, combing through academic databases and interviewing experts, the researchers uncovered that swaths of America’s forests have silently slipped toward oblivion.

In the rosaceae family – a diverse group that includes hawthorns and apple trees – more than a quarter of species are considered threatened, endangered or critically endangered. Half of all ash species are jeopardized by the invasive emerald ash borer, a jewel-green insect whose larvae feed on the living tissue just beneath a tree’s bark. An emerging disease known as “laurel wilt” is attacking all three native members of the genus persea, imperiling the small, fragrant evergreen trees.

Invasive insects or pathogens are the predominant drivers of extinction risk, the scientists found. Though trees have highly evolved immune systems – a necessity for any creature that survives for centuries – they are easily overwhelmed by disease they’ve never encountered before.

And climate change seems to be making these threats worse, said Stephanie Adams, who oversees plant health care at the Morton Arboretum. Trees stressed by extreme weather become easy pickings for marauding insects and fungi. Prolonged droughts deprive trees of the water they need to produce resin, the sticky substance they use to seal up wounds and trap potential invaders.

“There are trees that have been living in locations for hundreds and hundreds of years and suddenly they’re dying now,” Adams said.

Not all threats are introduced from abroad. In some cases, changing environmental conditions may turn previously benign organisms into killers.

Adams pointed to an outbreak of blight among bur oaks across the Midwest. Though the trees have long coexisted with the fungus that causes the disease, they only started dying in recent years. Researchers think that escalating severe storms and heavy floods – trademarks of rising global temperatures – are promoting the growth of the fungus at the expense of its tree hosts.

Bur oaks have not yet fallen into the IUCN’s “vulnerable” category, Adams said. But it’s not difficult to imagine that the rapid changes in temperature and weather patterns could suddenly send a once-healthy species into precipitous decline.

“Gosh.” Adams took a sharp breath. “That’s a horrible thought.”

The decline of American trees is just one piece of a broader crisis ravaging the planet. A 2019 report from the United Nations Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services estimated that 1 million species are in danger of dying out. The global rate of extinction is at least tens of hundreds of times higher than normal and still accelerating, threatening to eclipse some of the largest mass die-offs in Earth’s history.

The threats to trees are especially worrying, Westwood said, because of the distinct role they play in nature. Trees are the largest and longest-lived organisms on the planet. They constitute the framework of ecosystems, provide habitat for other creatures and even create their own weather.

And trees have an essential role in humanity’s efforts to avert catastrophic climate change. The United States’ plan to halve emissions by the end of the decade depends on forests to offset about 12% of its planet-warming pollution. Disease outbreaks, wildfires, droughts, logging and pollution may jeopardize that plan.

“We have a narrow and rapidly closing window to take action,” Westwood said – but there is still plenty the world can do.

Governments can curb the greenhouse gas pollution – mostly from burning fossil fuels – that threatens to warm the planet by 2.5 degrees Celsius (4.5 degrees Fahrenheit) by the end of the century. Communities can implement stronger policies to protect existing forests and ensure that reforestation projects plant a diverse mix of species that will be more resilient to emerging threats. Researchers can collect endangered species to ensure they are preserved in botanic gardens, and study those garden specimens to develop strategies for protecting their cousins in the wild.

“And then there are things we can all do as individuals,” Westwood said: Plant native species in our gardens. Volunteer in local woodlands. Avoid transporting firewood or other material that might carry dangerous pests.

Human lives depend on the shade that trees cast on scorching city streets, the way their roots and leaves filter the water and air. A healthy forest can slow a wildfire, buffer storm surge from a hurricane and offer solace to a heart in turmoil.

“It’s not altruistic,” Westwood said. “We’re not doing this because we’re tree-hugging nature lovers.”

People need trees as much as trees now depend on us, Westwood continued. “All of these actions are critical to our own survival as a species, and our future on this planet.”

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## Crime, Criminals

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HEADLINE	08/24 Auto theft unit snares armed 12yr-old thief
SOURCE	<a href="https://komonews.com/news-brief-newsletter/armed-12-year-old-boy-among-6-car-thief-suspects-snared-by-puget-sound-auto-theft-unit">https://komonews.com/news-brief-newsletter/armed-12-year-old-boy-among-6-car-thief-suspects-snared-by-puget-sound-auto-theft-unit</a>
GIST	<p>TACOMA, Wash. — A 12-year-old boy armed with a handgun was among the six alleged car thief suspects arrested in Pierce County during a recent operation by the Puget Sound Auto Theft Task Force, officials said Tuesday.</p> <p>Officials with the division said they recovered 15 stolen cars during an emphasis operation last weekend.</p> <p>KOMO News spoke to a U.S. Army veteran who said thieves stole his car from his driveway while his wife was home.</p>

In 21 years of serving and protecting the nation while in the military and as chief of security at an Army hospital, Christopher McKinney never thought he would be a victim.

"Now I'm that person I used to console while I was on, walking the beat or driving down the road to protect and serve," he said. "Well now I'm the victim."

After returning home Thursday, McKinney discovered that his Camaro was gone.

Pierce County sheriff's deputies said the car thief broke into his Puyallup home through a back door and stole two sets of car keys before driving away with the vehicle.

The crime happened while his wife was home and working upstairs.

"It's still heartbreaking to know that somebody can literally come into a nice neighborhood like this one and take something right out of my driveway in broad daylight," McKinney said. "That kind of hurts."

But over the weekend, the Puget Sound Auto Theft Task Force recovered the car along with 14 others during an emphasis operation whose members were out looking for stolen vehicles.

Detectives said six people were arrested, including a 12-year-old boy who was busted behind the wheel of a stolen mini-van along with a gun and other teens inside.

Deputies said the 2008 Chrysler Town & Country that the juveniles were found in was stolen during a carjacking in Pierce County.

The 12-year-old driver was booked into Remann Hall. The other juveniles were released to their parents.

"I've never seen a 12-year-old driving a car, in a stolen car, and he had a gun on him," said Pierce County sheriff's Sgt. Darren Moss. "Our job is to enforce the law. He's going to go through the juvenile detention system, but something is going on where our young children are committing crimes like these."

Deputies said another stolen car was found in a homeless encampment, and a different car thief was found with 1,000 fentanyl pills in their possession.

It's no secret car thefts have increased dramatically across Puget Sound.

According to the latest numbers from the auto theft task force, more than 3,000 cars have been stolen in Washington state so far this year. The same time last year, nearly 2,000 cars were stolen in the state.

COVID restrictions on jail bookings and new laws restricting police chases for vehicle theft have been blamed for the spike.

"We might not be able to chase these cars, but we're doing everything else that we can to get these guys in custody," Moss said, "So they can't go out and take people vehicles over and over again."

Victims say more needs to be done to protect families and stop the troubling trend.

"The judicial system and our government are not doing enough to take care of the little person who is working hard for 21 years to provide," McKinney said.

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HEADLINE	08/23 Report: 1-in-3 veterans arrest at least once
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2022/08/23/one-in-three-military-veteran-report-being-arrested/7131661299567/">https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2022/08/23/one-in-three-military-veteran-report-being-arrested/7131661299567/</a>

GIST	<p>Aug. 23 (UPI) -- Around a third of U.S. military veterans say they have been arrested at least once, according to results released on Tuesday by the Council on Criminal Justice.</p> <p><a href="#">The council also announced</a> the launch of a national commission to examine exactly why so many former military members end up in custody.</p> <p>The 15-member nonpartisan Veterans Justice Commission will also attempt to develop policy change suggestions.</p> <p>Former Defense Secretary <a href="#">Chuck Hagel</a> and former CIA Director <a href="#">Leon Panetta</a> are among the members on the panel.</p> <p>"Criminal justice reform has received significant bipartisan attention in recent years, but the issue of how the system manages the men and women who have served our country has been almost totally absent from the national conversation," <a href="#">Hagel said in a statement</a>.</p> <p>"Service-related trauma and other legacies of deployment push too many veterans on a path toward incarceration. We can and must do more to understand and interrupt that trajectory."</p> <p>Roughly one third of veterans report having been arrested and booked into jail at least once in their lives. That figure is in contrast to less than one-fifth of non-veterans.</p> <p>Combat-related risk factors, inconsistent diversion mechanisms and ineffective procedures to help police identify veterans once they have been arrested all contribute to the level of incarceration, according to the council.</p> <p>A total of 181,500 veterans were in prisons or jails in the United States, according to the most recent national survey.</p> <p>Around 200,000 U.S. servicemen and women leave the military every year.</p> <p><a href="#">Return to Top</a></p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Hate crimes rise during first half 2022</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.voanews.com/a/us-hate-crimes-rise-during-first-half-of-2022-/6713791.html">https://www.voanews.com/a/us-hate-crimes-rise-during-first-half-of-2022-/6713791.html</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — Hate crimes in major U.S. cities rose moderately during the first half of 2022 after posting double-digit percentage increases over the past two years, according to police data compiled by the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism.</p> <p>The data collected from 15 major city police departments show an average increase of about 5 percent in bias-motivated incidents so far this year, according to a new report by the extremism research center at California State University at San Bernardino. The 15 cities have a combined population of 25.5 million people.</p> <p>By comparison, a larger sample of data from 52 major cities compiled by the center showed hate crimes in the United States surged by nearly 30 percent in 2021, according to the report.</p> <p>A hate crime is defined by the FBI as a “criminal offense against a person or property motivated in whole or in part by an offender’s bias against a race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, or gender identity.”</p> <p>U.S. hate crimes have been on the rise in recent years, driven by factors ranging from a surge in anti-Asian sentiments during the COVID-19 pandemic to anti-Black animus in reaction to racial justice protests that broke out across America in 2020 after the killing of African American George Floyd while in police custody.</p>

If the increases seen so far this year hold, it would mark the fourth consecutive year in which hate crimes have risen in the United States.

“There is a bit of a deceleration going on, but events don’t get confined to one year, they can be multi-year trends,” said Brian Levin, executive director of the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism.

Arusha Gordon of the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law cautioned that hate crime data tend to undercount the true number of incidents.

“It always makes me very nervous discussing the data around hate crimes just because we know that the data really is so lacking,” Gordon, who heads the committee’s James Byrd Jr. Center to Stop Hate, said in an interview.

The findings come in advance of the FBI’s annual hate crime report for 2021 slated for release in the fall. A spokesperson said the bureau doesn’t have a confirmed release date yet.

Based on the preliminary data from major cities, Levin predicts that the FBI report will show a double-digit increase in hate crimes.

“The question is, how high?” Levin said.

Blacks, Jews, sexual minorities and Latinos have been the most frequent targets of hate crimes this year. Less so were Asian Americans, at least in some parts of the country.

Bias-motivated attacks on Asian Americans, which surged to record levels last year, dropped in several major cities, with the number of incidents in New York City decreasing by 48% and in Los Angeles falling by 17%.

Levin noted that anti-Asian hate crimes remain at high levels.

He pointed up, though, that anti-Muslim hate crimes dropped in 2002 after hitting record levels in the wake of the attacks of September 11, 2001.

What is more, overall hate crimes tend to rise during the second half of the year. With the U.S. midterm elections approaching, experts warn there could be a fresh surge in bias incidents later in the year.

“Oftentimes we see hate crimes increase as political rhetoric becomes more fierce,” Gordon said.

The spike in anti-Asian attacks during the COVID-19 pandemic prompted Congress last year to pass legislation aimed at combating hate crimes.

The COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act, signed into law by President Joe Biden in May 2021, created a new Justice Department position to expedite the review of COVID-19 related hate crimes.

In a report released on the first anniversary of the law, the Justice Department said it had charged more than 40 people with hate crimes tied to the pandemic since January 2021.

In September, Biden will host a White House summit “to counter the corrosive effects of hate-fueled violence on our democracy and public safety,” White House domestic policy advisor Susan Rice announced last week.

“Hate must have no safe harbor in America — especially when that hate fuels the kind of violence we’ve seen from Oak Creek to Pittsburgh, from El Paso to Poway, and from Atlanta to Buffalo,” Rice said in a statement.

HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Convicted: storm Capitol during Jan 6 riot</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/nation/florida-man-convicted-of-storming-us-capitol-during-riot/">https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/nation/florida-man-convicted-of-storming-us-capitol-during-riot/</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON (AP) — A Florida man was convicted Tuesday of storming the U.S. Capitol during the January 2021 insurrection.</p> <p>A District of Columbia federal judge returned the verdict after a trial where William Rogan Reid, 37, of Davie, Florida, and the government agreed upon a stipulated set of facts regarding his conduct, according to court records.</p> <p>The charges include felony counts of obstruction of an official proceeding and corruptly altering, destroying, mutilating or concealing a record, document or other objects, as well as five related misdemeanor offenses. His sentencing is scheduled for Dec. 7.</p> <p>Reid was arrested at his home in April 2021.</p> <p>According to court documents, Reid joined with others objecting to Democrat Joe Biden’s 2020 election victory over then-President Donald Trump. A mob attacked the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, in an attempt to stop Congress from certifying election results for Biden over the Republican Trump, authorities said. Five people died in the violence.</p> <p>According to the criminal complaint, Reid posted a video on social media the afternoon of Jan. 6 of people walking toward the Capitol, with superimposed text stating, “Time to storm the Capitol.”</p> <p>Reid was among the first rioters to break through a police line and rushed up steps towards the Northwest Courtyard, prosecutors said. Once there, he confronted another police line, where rioters again forced their way through.</p> <p>Reid climbed a set of bleachers, recorded another video and eventually entered the Capitol. Officials said he damaged a television and watercooler inside a restroom.</p> <p>Since Jan. 6, 2021, more than 860 people have been arrested in nearly all 50 states for crimes related to the breach of the U.S. Capitol, officials said. More than 260 people have been charged with assaulting or impeding law enforcement.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Australia largest ever detection of fentanyl</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/border-security/warning-follows-australias-largest-ever-detection-of-fentanyl/">https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/border-security/warning-follows-australias-largest-ever-detection-of-fentanyl/</a>
GIST	<p>The AFP has seized the largest shipment ever detected in Australia of the deadly opioid fentanyl, stopping more than five million potentially lethal doses of the drug hitting the streets, following a joint operation with the Australian Border Force (ABF).</p> <p>More than 11kg of pure powdered fentanyl and 30kg of methamphetamine were hidden inside in an industrial wooden lathe sent from Canada that arrived at the Port of Melbourne in December, 2021.</p> <p>The AFP, ABF and the Department of Home Affairs have established a joint operation to identify those responsible for importing the fentanyl – due to the seriousness this criminality poses to the Australian community.</p> <p>The AFP is seeking information from anyone with knowledge of the attempted importation and is warning the public about the dangers of the drug, which can be fatal from a dose of just 28mg – or about the same weight as two grains of salt.</p> <p>Fentanyl is a fast-acting opioid that is highly addictive and acts on the same receptors in the body as heroin.</p>

The drug is primarily used for medical purposes in Australia, but in overseas illicit drug markets it is has been cut with heroin, often with fatal consequences.

Australian authorities have only ever detected illicit fentanyl importations in minor amounts – all less than 30g – with the first case in 2017.

The investigation into the importation began after ABF officers inspected a container in Melbourne on 3 February, 2022.

The officers detected nearly 60kg of powdered substances hidden inside military-style ammunition boxes concealed within a three tonne lathe.

AFP forensic officers initiated a two-week operation to safely remove and analyse the powder.

The operation to safely remove the drugs from the machinery involved multiple state and Commonwealth agencies including ABF and Ambulance Victoria, which was on standby during the extraction and deconstruction phase of the operation.

Forensic officers wore protective bio hazard suits during the delicate and complex task of removing the powder from the lathe to protect against any inadvertent skin contact with the drug, which could cause harm, loss of consciousness and even death.

About 27kg of the powder contained fentanyl, yielding 11.2kg of pure fentanyl, equivalent to about 5.5 million potential lethal doses of 30mg. Forensic officers also removed about 30kg of methamphetamine, with an estimated street value of \$27 million.

Fentanyl sold illegally in Australia usually occurs in the form of patches used for medical treatment, which have been stolen or diverted from legitimate medical supplies. There is no precedent to place a street value on a large, bulk amount of the drug.

AFP acting Commander Anthony Hall said it was known criminal syndicates across the world were lacing illicit drugs such as heroin with this synthetic opioid, creating a dangerous cocktail of substances.

“People who use illicit drugs can never be certain what they are ingesting and this seizure highlights the potentially lethal game of Russian roulette they play. We don’t want to see Australia joining other countries in that deadly game.”

“Drug extraction can always pose a risk but the lethality of fentanyl, even in small doses, required our forensic officers to wear bio-hazard suits and we had multiple ambulances on standby. Even in this highly controlled environment, there was a risk to our members’ safety.”

“Our concern is that if such a large amount of fentanyl was in the hands of Australian-based criminal networks driven by greed, it could have passed uncontrolled and hidden into the community with possibly deadly results.

“The interception of this amount of drugs would be a significant blow even to a well-resourced criminal syndicate, and prevents millions of dollars of drug profit flowing back into the syndicate to fund their lavish lifestyles or next criminal venture.”

ABF Commander Maritime and Enforcement South James Watson praised the ABF officers who made the discovery.

“This was a massive amount of Fentanyl. The excellent work of our officers prevented these deadly drugs from reaching our streets, which has undoubtedly saved many, many lives,” Cmdr Watson said.



	<p>“Fentanyl is an extremely toxic substance to handle as well as being a lethal drug to use. There is a fentanyl epidemic in many parts of the world today, resulting in thousands of deaths of users every year. Our officers work tirelessly to prevent this harm from reaching our streets, as it is literally a life and death battle with these drugs.”</p> <p>“The ABF work with its partners both here in Australia and internationally to ensure illicit drugs don’t reach our communities.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Extremists eye ‘clandestine’ 3D gun printing</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.hstoday.us/featured/extremists-urge-clandestine-3d-gun-printing-for-defense-and-offense-as-new-atf-regulations-loom/">https://www.hstoday.us/featured/extremists-urge-clandestine-3d-gun-printing-for-defense-and-offense-as-new-atf-regulations-loom/</a>
GIST	<p>Online backlash to incoming rules that will place new requirements on privately made firearms has included extremists urging followers to learn 3D printing in order to “clandestinely produce weapons that are useful to us” and disregard the law.</p> <p>The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives said it received 1,758 reports of privately made firearms recovered by law enforcement in connection with criminal investigations in 2016; by 2021, that jumped to 19,344. Between January 2016 and December 2021, ATF said, there were 692 reports of these guns being involved in homicide or attempted homicide investigations.</p> <p>A license is not required to make a firearm for personal use, only for sale or distribution. Guns must also have a metal component, as firearms that cannot be detected by security screening equipment are not legal.</p> <p>Under the rules intended to address the proliferation of hard-to-trace “ghost guns,” retailers will have to run background checks on customers buying kits that contain the parts needed to assemble a gun. Retailers will also be required to keep records for however long they are licensed, expanding past the prior 20-year retention requirement.</p> <p>ATF <a href="#">said</a> the rule “clarifies that the definition of ‘firearm’ includes a weapon parts kit that is designed to or may readily be completed, assembled, restored, or otherwise converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive,” and defines a Privately Made Firearm (PMF) as a “firearm, including a frame or receiver, completed, assembled, or otherwise produced by a person other than a licensed manufacturer, and without a serial number placed by a licensed manufacturer at the time the firearm was produced.” All federal firearms licensees who take a PMF into their inventory will be required to mark the weapon with a unique serial number on a metal plate — not directly on the polymer of a printed gun, as this would be “susceptible [to] being readily obliterated, altered or removed” — within at least seven days in order to “allow ATF to trace those firearms through licensees’ records if involved in a crime.” FFLs who have an existing inventory of PMFs will have to put serial numbers on those guns by Oct. 23.</p> <p>The rule “does not prohibit an individual from making their own PMF, does not mandate unlicensed persons mark their own PMF, [and] does not require an FFL to accept unmarked PMFs into their inventory,” ATF said.</p> <p>The Department of Justice first issued a notice of proposed rulemaking on May 7, 2021, and received more than 290,000 comments during the subsequent 90-day period — the most that ATF had ever received on a proposed rule.</p> <p>On April 11, Attorney General Merrick Garland signed ATF final rule 2021R-05F, Definition of “Frame or Receiver” and Identification of Firearms. The rule is set to go into effect Wednesday, Aug. 24, which is 120 days after the rule’s April 26 publication in the Federal Register.</p> <p>In the run-up to enactment, social media and messaging platforms including Telegram and Twitter have been removing or suspending some accounts that shared blueprints for 3D guns, prompting the resurrection of targeted accounts under different names. Twitter’s <a href="#">rules</a> prohibit using the site “for any</p>

unlawful purpose or in furtherance of illegal activities,” including “selling, buying, or facilitating transactions in illegal goods or services, as well as certain types of regulated goods or services.” That includes “weapons, including firearms, ammunition, and explosives, and instructions on making weapons (e.g. bombs, 3D printed guns, etc.).”

Many accounts continue to post photos and videos of their builds, share advice and helpful links, and encourage others to print 3D guns. “The printing will continue until freedom improves,” tweeted one prominent account. “And even then, we’ll still keep printing.” The account noted last week that it had been suspended for 12 hours and anticipated a Twitter ban: “They don’t want you to build your own unserialized, untraceable firearms, but it’s too late. Can’t stop the signal.”

“It’s not enough to be pro 2A anymore,” reads one post on the Reddit /firearms board. “You need to be making as many ghost machine guns as possible.”

Across social media platforms, some of the posts asserting one’s right to print guns also incorporate anti-government language or memes, including referencing the standoffs at Ruby Ridge and Waco or the Revolutionary War. Hundreds of 3D gun guides and blueprints have also been posted on one file-sharing site alone within the past two weeks.

On Telegram, protests against the rule include a meme urging others to “subvert and stand up to their incremental limitations,” while some channels that regularly post white supremacist or anti-government extremist content have also been sharing information about 3D printing and forwarding posts from prominent accounts dedicated to printed firearms.

A self-described “revolutionary fascist” neo-Nazi website declared last month that the rules are intended to “curbstomp our ability to DIY build without their permission” and stressed to its white supremacist readers that “the ability to clandestinely produce weapons that are useful to us is paramount to our success.”

The author linked to tutorials on 3D printed firearms along with some of his favorite designs. “Now, thanks to a brave few that led the way, there is no country on earth that you can’t 3DP/DIY a very capable weapon, for both defense and offense. Weapons and their various accessories, magazines, drums, and even ammo (with a more refined skill set),” the article continued. “There is no excuse. No matter your location. Time is literally up. All associated skills of 3DP will come with trial and error. There’s no desktop shortcut. You have to learn and then do.”

“If you don’t think they’ll come for non-chassis accessories, printers, etc immediately after their August 24<sup>th</sup> change, you’re not paying attention,” the author added. “Their laws are not our laws. So they don’t matter.”

An accelerationist guide released last month, which attempted to drive extremists to commit violent acts including against critical infrastructure and communities of color, featured an article titled “Hard Reset Cop Killer” encouraging readers to ignore any thoughts or concerns about law and order. “‘Ten years for possession of a prohibited weapon’ the pig says, rent free, inside your head as you contemplate buying a 3D printer and some basic hand tools... kill the cop in your head,” it said.

One page of the 261-page manual focuses on how extremists can practice and be well-stocked when the price of ammunition is so high. Noting how enthusiasts are ordering thousands of rounds to shoot at the range on weekends while complaining about the prices, the guide adds that “as an Accelerationist, a White Guerrilla, a mortal enemy of the best System, you CANNOT afford to adopt this mentality. Even if you could afford to, financially — Our Race cannot.”

“Start treating brass like the precious metal it is. You can’t control the cost of ammo, but you — and only you — determine its value,” the guide continues. “You’ve got one round in the chamber. Will you put it through a paper target at the range, or a high value target where he’s most vulnerable?”

“Train regularly, but mindfully,” the page adds. “MAKE. EVERY. SHOT. COUNT.”

	<p>White supremacist and accelerationist ideologies have not been the only extremists to tout the potential of homemade firearms to advance their agenda. After last year's mass shooting at a Boulder grocery store, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula <a href="#">released</a> <i>Inspire</i> magazine's "Praise &amp; Guide: Colorado Attack" to assess what was done well by the attacker and what could have been done to inflict more harm. AQAP said the shooting underscored the ease with which potential shooters can acquire guns and told would-be jihadists to not start with simpler knife or vehicle attacks "until you search for these weapons and use them in your operation."</p> <p>"The possibility to place restrictions on the possession of weapons in America or to reduce their spread is extremely far and difficult. And all that you need is to search the internet and in arms shops for what is legally required of you to possess a weapon and how to buy it," the guide said. "And let the weapon be a machine gun, and if you find an obstacle for this, all you must do is look for ways to obtain stealth weapons by purchasing ready-made weapon parts and then assembling and installing them manually by yourself, and this method has two advantages: The first advantage: The control over it is less and the ways to obtain it are easier. The second advantage: The weapon will be without a serial number."</p> <p>The magazine included an image of parts on a table, labeled "ghost gun."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 UK suffers summer of violence</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.vice.com/en/article/v7v7dj/olivia-pratt-korbel-shooting-liverpool">https://www.vice.com/en/article/v7v7dj/olivia-pratt-korbel-shooting-liverpool</a>
GIST	<p>A 9-year-old girl was left to die by a gang of men after being shot in the chest when a gun chase spilled into her home in Liverpool, northwest England.</p> <p>Police said the incident occurred just before 10PM Monday when Olivia Pratt-Korbel's mother, Cheryl, opened her front door in the Knotty Ash area of the city after she heard gunshots outside.</p> <p>A man forced his way into the home to escape a balaclava-wearing gunman, who shot "indiscriminately" at the man being chased. He received multiple gunshot wounds and the girl's mother was shot in the hand, probably with the same bullet that killed Olivia, before the shooter fled.</p> <p>Merseyside Police said a group of men in a black Audi turned up at the house to take the injured man to hospital, leaving the girl, with her mother, to die in the hallway.</p> <p>Olivia was taken to hospital in a critical condition but died of her wounds later on Monday night. Police said that neither the gunman nor the man being chased was known to Olivia's family.</p> <p>At a press conference on Tuesday Chief Constable Serena Kennedy said: "It is believed that one of the injured parties, a 35-year-old man, was being chased by a man armed with a gun who was firing at him. The man being chased forced his way into Olivia's house and the offender ran in after him, firing a number of shots with complete disregard for Olivia and her family, who had no connection with the gunman or the man who forced his way in.</p> <p>"Sadly, Olivia was fatally wounded when the gunman fired at the man who was trying to get into the house, and her mum also suffered a gunshot to her wrist. The 35-year-old man who had been chased suffered a number of gunshots to his upper body. Whilst Olivia lay dying, he was picked up by his friends who took him to hospital."</p> <p>Assistant Chief Constable Jenny Sims said earlier: "This is a truly shocking incident in which tragically a young and innocent girl has been shot and sadly died."</p> <p>"No parent should ever have to suffer the loss of a child in these dreadful circumstances," she said.</p> <p>"This crime is abhorrent and our communities must come forward and tell us who is responsible. This cowardly individual does not deserve to be walking the streets and I would urge those who know anything</p>

to speak to us and tell us what they know so that we can put the person responsible behind bars where they belong."

The city is still reeling from the [murder last November of schoolgirl Ava White](#), 12, who was stabbed to death on an evening out with friends in Liverpool city centre. A 15-year-old boy, who could not be named because of his age, was later convicted of her murder.

Olivia's killing occurred on the 15th anniversary of the gun murder of Rhys Jones, 11, in 2007 in a city with [a bloody track record of youth gun crime](#).

Mayor of Liverpool Joanne Anderson said [on Twitter](#): "15 years to the day that Rhys Jones was murdered, another innocent child of our city becomes a victim to gun crime. Has nothing been learned? Enough is enough. This is an appalling act of evil. If you know something, you must come forward. Guns have no place in our communities."

Home Secretary Priti Patel offered Olivia's family her "heartfelt condolences" and Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer [tweeted](#): "My thoughts are with the little girl's family, devastating news, for them and their community."

The murder comes after a summer surge of [stabblings and shootings across Liverpool](#) and other parts of England in the last four weeks.

In a separate incident that also took place on Monday night, a woman in her 50s died from stab wounds after police believe she tried to break up a fight in a pub car park in the Liverpool suburb of Kirkby.

On Sunday, [Ashley Dale](#), 28 was shot and killed at her home in Liverpool, 16 years after her brother Lewis Dunne who was shot to death aged 16 in the city in 2015, although their deaths are unconnected. Police said no arrests have yet been made in the hunt for Ashley's killer.

Sam Rimmer, 22 was shot dead on the 16th of August by two men who escaped on electric bikes in inner city Liverpool. There is no suggestion the incident is linked to any of the other murders in the city and no arrests have been made.

In another unrelated incident in Manchester, Rico Burton, 28, the cousin of boxer Tyson Fury, was stabbed to death on Sunday. Two men aged 21 and 20 have been arrested. Javell Morgan, 20, was stabbed to death on the 15th of August after a street carnival in the Moss Side area of Manchester. Police are yet to make any arrests.

In London, according to an [online homicide tracker](#), 12 people have been killed in the last month, including four young people killed by gun shots in the space of three weeks – an unusually high count for the capital.

Kacey Boothe, 25, was shot outside a child's birthday party in Walthamstow on the 13th of August. Police are yet to make any arrests. A man has been charged with the murder of Camilo Palacio, 22, who was shot in Wood Green on the 24th of July and hours earlier on the same day, in a killing that police are not linking with any others, Sam Brown, 28, was shot at a party in Walthamstow.

In a case that received national attention, Thomas O'Halloran, 87, was knifed to death while travelling on his mobility scooter in Ealing, west London on the 16th of August. Lee Byer, 44, was charged with his murder three days later. It is not linked to any other cases.

On the 28th of July, Lilia Valutyte, 9, was stabbed to death while playing in the street in Boston, Lincolnshire. Deividas Skebas, 22, has been charged with her murder.

Latest government homicide data for England and Wales shows 59 children aged under 16 were killed between April 2020 and March 2021, making up one in ten of the 594 homicides over that time.

David Wilson, professor of criminology at Birmingham City University, said hot weather increases violent crime in Western countries. “It is there in the language, people become ‘hot tempered’ and they ‘lose their cool’. Hot weather encourages us to go outside and engage with people we are unfamiliar with, which increases the risk of violent crime, so you would expect to see an increase in violent crime in the summer.”

But Wilson also said that murders do not happen uniformly, they most often occur in specific areas.

“These murders are not happening in Leamington Spa, Cheltenham or Chelsea, they are happening in Liverpool and London. There is no doubt people are experiencing anxiety about the cost of living, and it is an established fact that the more inequality there is, the more homicides there are. If people believe they have to live on their wits or as individuals as opposed to being part of a functioning society, that’s when you get the increase in violence.”

Paul Walmsley, a youth intervention consultant who works with children at risk of joining gangs in Liverpool, told VICE World News that he had hoped that the shocking murder of Ava White last year would have jolted the city out of its violence.

“The killing of Ava White should have been a game changer, but it clearly wasn’t. As a society, we have to take a look at ourselves, because for a young girl to be killed like this is just horrific.”

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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Ex-cop misled judge Breonna Taylor killing</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/23/us/kelly-goodlett-breonna-taylor.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/23/us/kelly-goodlett-breonna-taylor.html</a>
GIST	<p>LOUISVILLE, Ky. — A former police detective admitted on Tuesday that she had helped mislead a judge into wrongly authorizing a raid of Breonna Taylor’s apartment in Louisville, Ky., setting in motion the nighttime operation in which the police fatally shot Ms. Taylor.</p> <p>The former detective, Kelly Goodlett, pleaded guilty in federal court to one count of conspiracy, admitting that she had worked with another officer to falsify a search warrant application and had later lied to cover up their act. In pleading guilty, Ms. Goodlett became the first police officer to be convicted over the March 2020 raid, during which the police were searching for evidence of drug dealing by Ms. Taylor’s former boyfriend, Jamarcus Glover.</p> <p>Inside a courtroom in downtown Louisville, Ms. Goodlett, 35, admitted that she had known there was not enough evidence to support approving the warrant, but had nonetheless failed to object when a fellow detective falsely wrote that the police knew Mr. Glover was receiving packages at Ms. Taylor’s home.</p> <p>Ms. Taylor’s mother, Tamika Palmer, sat in the courtroom during the plea and wiped away tears, while a woman beside her held her arm. As part of the plea deal, Ms. Goodlett will remain free on bond until she is sentenced. The maximum prison term for the crime to which she pleaded guilty is five years.</p> <p>Ms. Goodlett’s plea suggested that she may be cooperating with the Justice Department prosecutors <a href="#">who have charged her and two other former Louisville police officers</a> over their roles in acquiring the search warrant for the raid.</p> <p>A fourth officer is accused of violating Ms. Taylor’s civil rights, as well as her neighbors’, by firing 10 bullets through the two apartments. None of those bullets struck anyone.</p> <p>Ms. Taylor, a 26-year-old emergency room technician who hoped to become a nurse, was sleeping in bed next to her boyfriend, Kenneth Walker, when the police began banging on her door after midnight, waking her up. Mr. Walker said later that when the banging began, they asked who was at the door and received no response, though the officers said they had announced themselves.</p> <p>Mr. Walker said that when the officers rammed open the apartment door, he believed they were intruders and fired one shot, striking an officer in the leg. Three officers returned fire.</p>

Neither of the two officers who shot Ms. Taylor has been charged. Prosecutors have said in court documents that neither of those officers knew that the search warrant was based partially on false information.

Ms. Goodlett, who resigned from the police force after [she was charged earlier this month](#), was not present at the raid.

For more than a month after the shooting, Ms. Taylor's death received little attention. It began to attract scrutiny in May 2020, just before a police officer in Minneapolis was recorded fatally kneeling on George Floyd's neck as he struggled to breathe. The police killings of Ms. Taylor and Mr. Floyd, both of whom were Black, led to protests against police brutality and racism across the United States in the spring and summer of 2020, quickly becoming [one of the largest protest movements in American history](#).

Brett Hankison, the former detective who is facing federal charges of violating the rights of Ms. Taylor and her neighbors by firing shots through their apartments, also faced state charges over the shooting, but [a jury acquitted him earlier this year](#). Before the Justice Department stepped in this month, he was the only officer to face criminal charges over the raid.

The shooting of Ms. Taylor prompted several states and cities to ban or restrict the use of "no-knock" warrants, which authorize police officers to charge into people's homes without warning. Those warrants have led to [a series of fatal shootouts](#), particularly when they are [based on faulty information](#) or [a police officer's lies](#). In the raid on Ms. Taylor's home, the police had obtained such a warrant; officers did knock on her door, but it remains in dispute whether they announced themselves as the police.

In the application for the search warrant for Ms. Taylor's home, Joshua Jaynes, a former detective who is among those facing charges, claimed that he had "verified through a U.S. postal inspector" that Mr. Glover, Ms. Taylor's former boyfriend, was having packages sent to her apartment. During proceedings last year over his firing from the Police Department, Mr. Jaynes acknowledged that he had not spoken with any postal inspector. He has pleaded not guilty to the federal charges against him.

In the [plea agreement that was filed in court on Tuesday](#), Ms. Goodlett and the prosecutors said that detectives had seen Mr. Glover pick up a package at Ms. Taylor's apartment about two months before the raid, but had not been able to find any more evidence that he was receiving packages there. The plea agreement states that the detectives did not know whether Mr. Glover had even been to Ms. Taylor's apartment in the six weeks before the raid.

Though Ms. Goodlett knew that Mr. Jaynes' claim in the warrant application was false, she did not change the application. Instead, the plea agreement states, she misleadingly claimed that Mr. Glover had been using Ms. Taylor's address as his own, despite the fact that both detectives knew he had not been living there.

The plea agreement states that two days before the raid, a police sergeant who was keeping watch on Ms. Taylor's apartment had seen a car belonging to Mr. Walker nearby. The sergeant, Kyle Meany, did not disclose that information to Ms. Goodlett, the agreement says, adding that if he had, it could have undermined the search warrant application by casting doubt on the existence of any continuing relationship between Ms. Taylor and Mr. Glover. Mr. Meany has pleaded not guilty to charges of violating Ms. Taylor's rights and lying to the F.B.I. about the warrant.

As Ms. Taylor's death attracted more public attention, prosecutors said, Ms. Goodlett and Mr. Jaynes met in Mr. Jaynes's garage and decided to tell investigators that the warrant had been based not on the verification of a postal inspector, but on an offhand comment by a sergeant. Mr. Jaynes has repeated that claim, but federal prosecutors said that it, too, was false.

The government has charged Mr. Jaynes with violating Ms. Taylor's rights by submitting the false warrant application and with conspiring to obstruct investigations into the warrant.



	<p>In the plea agreement, Ms. Goodlett and federal prosecutors said that Mr. Jaynes had chosen to seek the warrant from a judge who he had previously suggested would not look too closely at the application.</p> <p>The judge, Mary Shaw, is running for re-election and has declined to comment about the matter of the warrant, noting that she could be called to testify in the trials of the other officers. Neither the Justice Department nor Ms. Goodlett's lawyer has commented on whether Ms. Goodlett has agreed to cooperate with prosecutors.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Tukwila PD confronts organized retail thefts</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.q13fox.com/news/tukwila-pd-recovers-several-thousand-dollars-worth-of-stolen-items-jabs-at-organized-theft">https://www.q13fox.com/news/tukwila-pd-recovers-several-thousand-dollars-worth-of-stolen-items-jabs-at-organized-theft</a>
GIST	<p><b>TUKWILA, Wash.</b> - Police recovered several thousand dollars' worth of merchandise from multiple organized retail theft suspects on Monday. In addition, the <a href="#">Tukwila</a> Police Department (TPD) released a list of common signs their officers look for to spot these suspects.</p> <p>According to a <a href="#">Facebook post</a> from the TPD, a single officer recovered all the stolen items simply by being at the right places at the right time.</p> <p>Authorities say in one instance, a woman loaded all the merchandise...onto a counter and then into her shopping cart. As she made her way to the exit doors, she laughed at the employees trying to stop her and said, "I'm going to push this cart right out those doors, and you're not going to stop me or do anything about it." The TPD says an employee pointed at the officer walking toward the doors and said, "no, but he is." Authorities say the laughing stopped, and she bolted out of the store - leaving her selected items behind.</p> <p>In another situation, the officer heard a security alarm go off and saw two men with bags of stolen clothes laughing at an employee as they left the building. Authorities say the officer stopped them immediately and recovered all of the merchandise.</p> <p>According to the TPD, <a href="#">Washington</a> state retailers lost around \$2.7 billion dollars to organized retail crime. Across the nation, that number rises to \$70 billion dollars. Authorities say the majority of the shoplifters in the Tukwila area are not stealing out of necessity, but for profit.</p> <p><b>HOW TO SPOT ORGANIZED RETAIL THEFT</b></p> <p>The Tukwila Police Department listed off a couple tongue-in-cheek commonalities that officers look for when spotting organized retail theft suspects:</p> <p><b>THE GROUP APPROACH</b></p> <p>The TPD says an indicator of organized retail crime is when a large group of people carrying empty bags walks into a store and immediately splits up into smaller groups, fanning out throughout the store.</p> <p><b>THE 'ANYTHING GOES'</b></p> <p>Authorities say a shopper turns into a suspect when they throw clothing items into their cart without checking the sizes. Police say they often see criminals use this strategy to steal brand names like Levi's, The North Face, Columbia and Nike.</p> <p><b>THE PARANOID</b></p> <p>The TPD says they often see these suspects spending several hours inside a store, trying to blend in while concealing numerous items. Officers say these suspects may serve as a scout for a larger group, spending their time observing how attentive employees and officers are in the store. If they are working in a group, they will often cause a scene or a distraction for the rest of the group to come in and steal more items.</p> <p><b>THE LOOKOUT</b></p>



	<p>The TPD describes this type of suspect as a person who loiters outside the main doors, while another suspect enters inside to collect items to steal.</p> <p><b>THE TANTRUM</b></p> <p>Police say throwing a tantrum is a common tactic used by theft suspects when they are caught red-handed. The suspect's overall hope is that the store would rather let them walk out of the store with the stolen merchandise, instead of having them scare other customers away.</p> <p><b>THE DOUBLE DOWNER</b></p> <p>The TPD describes this type of suspect as someone who pretends to have forgotten their method of payment at home, after an officer makes their presence known to the suspect.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Judges weigh future of breathalyzers</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.q13fox.com/news/judges-weigh-future-of-blood-alcohol-breathalyzers-with-7-years-of-case-on-the-line">https://www.q13fox.com/news/judges-weigh-future-of-blood-alcohol-breathalyzers-with-7-years-of-case-on-the-line</a>
GIST	<p><b>SEATTLE</b> - A panel of three <a href="#">King County</a> District Court judges heard oral arguments on Tuesday on the admissibility of blood alcohol readings from the breathalyzer used by all law enforcement in the state.</p> <p>The three judges were empaneled because a motion to suppress the reading in the case of a suspected DUI driver was deemed to have 'countywide significance.'</p> <p>At issue is the Drager 9510 Breathalyzer—which is programmed and issued by the <a href="#">Washington</a> State Patrol (WSP) to every law enforcement agency in the state—and how it calculates a person's blood alcohol level.</p> <p>"The state toxicologist and breath technicians have said for seven years the Drager machine needs to do the calculation in [accordance] with the administrative code, and then I found out that the machine does not do that calculation," said George Bianchi, a veteran attorney with 37 years of defending drivers suspected of DUI.</p> <p>The Washington Administrative Code (WAC) says the device must round the result to three decimal points. Bianchi argued—and WSP agreed—the device <i>truncates</i> the mean of four sample readings to four decimal points, rather than rounding.</p> <p>Bianchi was brought into the case to make the same argument he made earlier this year in the case of Kitsap County man accused of DUI. Realizing the significance of the argument, all four district court judges heard Bianchi's arguments.</p> <p>In June, the judge <a href="#">issued an 89-page ruling</a> saying results from the Drager breathalyzer could not be admissible in court. Kitsap County Prosecutor Chad Enright responded by telling all law enforcement in the county not to rely on the breathalyzer results when building DUI case against someone.</p> <p>On Monday, WSP trooper Christopher Hooper took the witness stand to testify on behalf of the King County Prosecutor, who was defending the calculations made by the Drager.</p> <p>Hooper said he has trained other troopers on to use the breathalyzer and do their own math to see if the device is within plus- or minus-10% of the mean reading.</p> <p>He admitted in court that during his training, he was told the device rounds the final result, rather than truncates.</p> <p>The judges must decide if truncating the final result or rounding, as stated in the WAC, make enough of a difference to suppress the blood-alcohol content in the DUI case. If they do, it could lead to the inadmissibility of BAC results made by the Drager breathalyzer in all King County DUI cases.</p>

	<p>"Anyone that has been convicted of a point-15 or higher alcohol level has the ability to possibly go back and have their conviction overturned for that breath test reading," said Bianchi.</p> <p>A conviction with a BAC level of .15 or above means mandatory minimum enhanced penalties. Jail time is doubled, license suspension is triple and fines are considerably higher. At this level, one-one hundredth of a percentage point can make a real difference in the penalty a person pays, including having the privilege of driving revoked.</p> <p>The State Patrol told FOX 13 that it has made a decision going forward.</p> <p>"WSP investigated two possible remedies to this issue: a software patch to be in compliance with the WAC, or a rules change within the WAC to be aligned with the current calibration methodology. We have chosen the latter," said WSP spokesperson Chris Loftis.</p> <p>The presiding judge did not give a timetable for the judge's ruling.</p> <p>Because King County is the largest county in the state, many jurisdictions are watching closely how the judges will rule in the case.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Snohomish Co. courts face juror shortage</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/snohomish-county-municipal-courts-experiencing-juror-shortage/LLD5XZB7LFFADNCP2QRDRNZI34/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/snohomish-county-municipal-courts-experiencing-juror-shortage/LLD5XZB7LFFADNCP2QRDRNZI34/</a>
GIST	<p>SNOHOMISH COUNTY, Wash. — The pandemic led to a backlog of court cases throughout Washington, but some Snohomish County municipal courts are facing an additional challenge: missing jurors.</p> <p>“What I find most frustrating is when we’re preparing for jury service and then I have to go tell the judge I don’t have enough jurors for you to move forward,” said Suzanne Elsner, court administrator for Marysville Municipal Court.</p> <p>Elsner says municipal courts in both Marysville and Edmonds have had to delay trials because not enough people arrive for jury duty. Six jurors are needed for trial, but courts need at least 12 for the selection process.</p> <p>“We send out reminder letters, so I just mailed those this morning — 18 or 20 reminder letters to the people that haven’t yet responded to say, ‘Hey, you’ve been summoned. You’re still expected to appear, and you haven’t been excused,’” said Elsner.</p> <p>Marysville does day-of jury selection, so when enough potential jurors don’t show up, everything comes to a halt.</p> <p>“The attorneys are here, the defendant, the witnesses are here, the officers are here. Everybody is here, ready to go except the jurors,” said Elsner.</p> <p>For municipal courts, it can cause a delay or dismissal of misdemeanor and gross misdemeanor cases, like DUIs, domestic violence and theft.</p> <p>“So those are really community related. So when you don’t show up for jury duty it affects the community, because you may have a domestic violence victim who’s been waiting for her day or his day in court. And if jurors don’t show up, you’re affecting that individual and that family, and the person being charged,” said Elsner.</p>

	<p>“No show” jurors can face a misdemeanor charge under Washington law, though Marysville is taking a softer approach for now.</p> <p>“Normally what we’ve done is we’ve put their name back into the jury pool and we will summon them again, sort of as a reminder as, ‘Hey, you didn’t show up this time. Here’s your new jury summons and we expect you to be here’”, said Elsner.</p> <p>In Washington, employers are not mandated to pay their employees while serving on jury duty. For that reason, Elsner says she does see some requests for excusal because of financial hardship. However, she says that’s not the case for all the jurors who fail to appear. She says many people don’t respond to the summons and then don’t show up on trial day.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>08/23 Kidnapped, robbed by date from dating app</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/south-sound-news/parkland-man-kidnapped-robbed-by-woman-he-met-dating-app/QKKKANZKX5AIPCK6S5DXEIR6NE/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/south-sound-news/parkland-man-kidnapped-robbed-by-woman-he-met-dating-app/QKKKANZKX5AIPCK6S5DXEIR6NE/</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>A Parkland man was kidnapped and robbed for three hours after he met a woman on the dating app Plenty of Fish, according to the Pierce County Sheriff’s Office.</p> <p>The 30-year-old man told deputies he drove to an apartment complex to meet with the woman, who had presented herself as someone similar in age.</p> <p>The victim said he was in the apartment for about five minutes when a man appeared, pointed a gun at him and ordered him to take off his clothes.</p> <p>According to the victim, the woman started to take photos of the nude victim.</p> <p>The couple then ordered the victim to unlock his cell phone and instructed him to transfer \$6,000 to their account using an app.</p> <p>When the transfer was flagged as fraudulent, the couple made the victim attempt more transactions via other apps.</p> <p>According to deputies, the couple even posed as the victim over the phone to try and get the account unlocked.</p> <p>After three hours, the couple released the victim, threatening to send the nude photos to his contact list if he told anyone what happened.</p> <p>The next day, deputies were dispatched to the same apartment for a domestic violence incident.</p> <p>When deputies arrived, they found the man from the robbery and as they went to arrest him, he reached for a gun inside his pocket.</p> <p>Deputies were able to safely detain the 22 year-old man, who was arrested and put in the back of a patrol car.</p> <p>According to deputies, the man moved his handcuffs to the front of his body and while attempting to escape, broke the interior door panel and the top of the seat belt fastener.</p> <p>The man was charged with robbery, kidnapping, extortion, unlawful possession of a firearm and malicious mischief. Bail was set at \$125,000.</p>

	<p>According to deputies, the man has a lengthy criminal history, including convictions for robbery, assault, residential burglary and unlawful possession of a firearm. He is also on supervision with the Department of Corrections.</p> <p>The 19-year-old woman was also arrested and charged with robbery, kidnapping and extortion. Her bail was set at \$50,000.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Lynnwood arson fire displaces families</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/lynnwood-apartment-fire-46th-avenue-west/281-7b8b0dd5-3a6c-45ac-8830-0d8b24cd97b5">https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/lynnwood-apartment-fire-46th-avenue-west/281-7b8b0dd5-3a6c-45ac-8830-0d8b24cd97b5</a>
GIST	<p>LYNNWOOD, Wash. — More than a dozen people were forced from their homes after a 2-alarm fire broke out at an apartment complex in Lynnwood Tuesday morning.</p> <p>After reviewing surveillance video and interviewing witnesses, investigators determined the cause of the fire was likely arson, according to the Lynnwood Police Department.</p> <p>Crews with South County Fire responded after midnight to a report of a car fire at an apartment complex on the 19300 block of 46th Avenue West, which is located just north of the Fred Meyer store on 196th Street.</p> <p>When crews arrived, they saw the fire had spread to the apartment complex and called for a second alarm. South County Fire tweeted just after 1:45 a.m. that the fire was under control.</p> <p>Ten units were damaged by fire and water, according to the YWCA, which operates the housing complex.</p> <p>The Red Cross responded to the scene and took the 15 residents to a nearby hotel. Eleven adults and four children were displaced from their homes.</p> <p>“We’re grateful no one was harmed, and appreciate the supportive response of community partners,” stated Mary Anne Dillon, Executive Director of Snohomish County YWCA. “Our immediate priority is to identify what each family needs to survive right now, from prepared meals and personal care items, to clothing and car seats – as well as what they need to recover and rebuild housing stability for the long-term.”</p> <p>Those who want to donate to help cover the cost of temporary shelter for displaced families can visit the YWCA's website.</p> <p>Neighbors told KING 5 they could feel the heat from the fire across the street.</p> <p>“It was just nerve-wracking,” one neighbor told KING 5. “You know, to see something go up in flames like that. I mean, it went quick, and fire is a very dangerous thing.”</p> <p>No injuries have been reported.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Deputies: no Gorge mass shooting intent</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/gorge-amphitheater-arrest-no-mass-shooting/281-8dc80d31-1ab3-4c1b-a497-1be361d0e76a">https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/gorge-amphitheater-arrest-no-mass-shooting/281-8dc80d31-1ab3-4c1b-a497-1be361d0e76a</a>
GIST	<p>GEORGE, Wash. — Deputies do not <a href="#">believe a man arrested at the Gorge Amphitheater</a> the night of Aug. 19 intended to commit a mass shooting.</p> <p>Detectives interviewed the 31-year-old from Ephrata and searched two vehicles before coming to the conclusion.</p>

"Detectives have interviewed [the suspect] and have served search warrants on two vehicles," a [Facebook](#) post from the sheriff's office states. "While the investigation is not yet finished, what we can say is that we now don't feel that his intent was to cause a mass shooting."

The Grant County Sheriff's Office has not specified why deputies originally believed the man "may have had plans to commit a mass shooting," nor has the office released details into why that is no longer the case.

The man was arrested after security and visitors at the Gorge told police that someone in the parking lot had inhaled an unknown "substance or gas from a balloon" and loaded two pistols from the trunk of his car.

The man reportedly concealed one of the pistols in his waistband and put the second pistol in an outside-the-waistband holster, according to the Grant County Sheriff's Office.

The man reportedly approached concertgoers attending the Bass Canyon and asked attendees what time the show ended and where people would be exiting the venue.

The man never made it inside the event and was detained and disarmed by police outside the venue gates. He was arrested on suspicion of one count of possession of a dangerous weapon and one count of unlawful carrying or handling of a weapon.

No one was injured.

The man was arraigned in Grant County District Court Monday on the two charges. He pleaded not guilty.

The man was released Monday night after posting bail.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Malaysia's former PM heads to prison</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/23/world/asia/najib-razak-malaysia-1mdb-prison.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/23/world/asia/najib-razak-malaysia-1mdb-prison.html</a>
GIST	<p>Malaysia's former prime minister, Najib Razak, who was convicted two years ago of participating in a multibillion-dollar corruption scandal, was headed for prison Tuesday to start serving a 12-year sentence after the nation's highest court rejected his final appeal.</p> <p>A five-judge federal court panel, headed by the nation's chief justice, unanimously upheld Mr. Najib's conviction on seven corruption counts after finding that his appeal was "devoid of any merits."</p> <p>The prospect of Mr. Najib, 69, going to prison concluded a stunning fall for the British-educated son of one prime minister and nephew of another who spent nearly his entire adult life in politics and held numerous cabinet posts.</p> <p>"This is a historic moment in Malaysian politics," said James Chin, a professor of Asian studies at the University of Tasmania and an expert on Malaysian politics. "This is the first time a prime minister, or an ex-prime minister, has been found guilty of corruption and is actually going to jail."</p> <p>With its decision, the high court clearly established its independence from politics and demonstrated that Malaysia is governed by the rule of law, at least in such a high-profile case.</p> <p>Nicknamed the "Man of Steal" by critics, Mr. Najib was convicted two years ago on seven counts of abuse of power, breach of trust and money laundering for illegally receiving transfers of \$9.8 million from SRC International, a former unit of the government investment fund, 1 Malaysia Development Berhad.</p> <p>He faces dozens more charges in the scandal involving \$4.5 billion that disappeared from the fund, commonly known as 1MDB, which he oversaw as both prime minister and finance minister.</p>

Money stolen from the fund was traced by prosecutors to the [purchases of a huge yacht](#) and a Picasso painting, as well as an investment in the Hollywood blockbuster “The Wolf of Wall Street,” which was [produced](#) by Mr. Najib’s stepson. [More than \\$700 million](#) of the money ended up in Mr. Najib’s personal bank accounts.

The national scandal [led to the ouster of his party](#), the United Malays National Organization, in elections four years ago, but the party eventually returned to power as part of a coalition.

Anwar Ibrahim, the opposition leader in Parliament, called Tuesday’s ruling a “momentous occasion for democracy and the rule of law” and noted that the criminal case was filed after Mr. Najib was voted out and a new government took over.

“I recognize the resoluteness and bravery of the judiciary to reach its decision based on facts and laws, and not succumb to the political influence of those in power, which we Malaysians experienced for decades,” he said.

Mr. Najib was prime minister from 2009 to 2018; the 1MDB scandal began [emerging midway](#) through his tenure. Yet for years, he managed to avoid accountability for his role, even continuing to serve in Parliament after his conviction.

Some analysts predicted that he had retained so much political influence that his conviction could be overturned on appeal, or that his allies in government could win dismissal of the charges.

The judges rejected numerous attempts by Mr. Najib over the past week to delay a ruling, including his filing of a last-minute motion to recuse the country’s chief justice, Maimun Tuan Mat, who headed the panel.

His defense maintained that Ms. Maimun, the country’s first female chief justice, could be biased because her husband had once posted a comment on social media critical of Mr. Najib.

Mr. Najib dismissed his lead lawyer in late July before the appeals hearing began last week and then sought an extension so that his new lawyer could prepare his defense. The court rejected the request, noting that the lawyer should not have taken the case if he was not prepared to argue it.

In the end, his lawyers did not present oral arguments in his defense, relying on the written appeal submitted earlier.

“It is our unanimous view that the evidence led during the trial [points overwhelmingly to guilt](#) on all seven charges,” the chief justice said. “These appeals are therefore [unanimously dismissed](#) and the conviction and sentence are affirmed.”

Mr. Najib left court in a black vehicle with a police escort. Malaysian news outlets reported that he was being taken to Kajang Prison near Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia’s largest city.

In addition to his 12-year sentence, he was ordered to pay a fine of about \$50 million.

During a 2018 search of three residences that Mr. Najib owned, the police seized more than 350 boxes and bags containing cash, jewelry and designer handbags [estimated to be worth \\$273 million](#).

Mr. Najib has cast himself as a victim and blamed the elusive financier Jho Low, who helped siphon money from 1MDB and used his share to give extravagant gifts of jewelry and paintings to newfound celebrity friends. He remains a fugitive and is believed to be in China.

With his court appeals at an end, Mr. Najib still has the option of seeking a pardon from Malaysia’s king. Professor Chin, of the University of Tasmania, predicted that the ruling against Mr. Najib would prompt the government to call for elections as soon as October.

"The biggest winner is, of course, the Malaysian public," he said. "They really wanted Najib to go to jail. The confidence people have toward the chief justice was reaffirmed by this ruling."

On Sunday, Mr. Najib posted a despondent note on [his Facebook page](#), perhaps recognizing that his final appeal was unlikely to succeed.

"Sometimes we feel that our efforts and kindness are in vain," he wrote. "There are times when we feel overwhelmed by tests and trials. With slander and persecution. With a hope that ends in failure. With sincerity rewarded with betrayal. Sometimes we feel we are ... alone."

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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Guilty: 2 in plot to kidnap Michigan gov.</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/wireStory/deliberations-start-men-charged-gov-whitmer-plot-88733412">https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/wireStory/deliberations-start-men-charged-gov-whitmer-plot-88733412</a>
GIST	<p>GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. -- A jury on Tuesday convicted two men of conspiring to kidnap Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in 2020, delivering swift verdicts in a plot that was broken up by the FBI and described as a rallying cry for a U.S. civil war by anti-government extremists.</p> <p>The result was a big victory for the U.S. Justice Department. A different jury just four months ago couldn't reach unanimous decisions on Adam Fox or Barry Croft Jr. but acquitted two other men, a stunning conclusion that led to a second trial.</p> <p>Their arrests nearly two years ago came at an extremely tense time: the volatile homestretch of the election between Joe Biden and then-President Donald Trump playing out against a backdrop of armed protests over COVID-19 restrictions, especially in Michigan.</p> <p>Jury selection in the retrial of Fox and Croft coincidentally occurred a day after FBI agents searched Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate for documents, putting the agency in headlines at the same time that the judge was trying to detect any biases about law enforcement in the jury pool.</p> <p>Fox and Croft were convicted Tuesday of two counts of conspiracy related to the kidnapping scheme and attempts to use a weapon of mass destruction. Prosecutors said they wanted to blow up a bridge to disrupt police if the abduction could be pulled off at Whitmer's vacation home.</p> <p>Croft, 46, a trucker from Bear, Delaware, was also convicted of another explosives charge. The jury deliberated for roughly eight hours over two days.</p> <p>"Today's verdicts prove that violence and threats have no place in our politics and those who seek to divide us will be held accountable. They will not succeed," said Whitmer, a Democrat, who turned 51 years old on Tuesday.</p> <p>"But we must also take a hard look at the status of our politics," she added. "Plots against public officials and threats to the FBI are a disturbing extension of radicalized domestic terrorism that festers in our nation, threatening the very foundation of our republic."</p> <p>Law enforcement officials across the country have been warning about an increase in threats and the potential for violence against agents or buildings.</p> <p>Fox and Croft, who face sentences of up to life in prison, just stared at the jury as the verdicts were read. Defense attorney Christopher Gibbons shook his head while another defense lawyer, Joshua Blanchard, removed his glasses.</p> <p>Jurors declined to speak to reporters.</p> <p>"It's been a good fight. We were hoping for a different outcome," Gibbons said.</p>



During closing arguments Monday, a prosecutor had a blunt message: No one can strap on an AR-15 rifle and body armor and snatch a governor.

“But that wasn’t the defendants’ ultimate goal,” Assistant U.S. Attorney Nils Kessler said. “They wanted to set off a second American civil war, a second American Revolution, something that they call the boogaloo. And they wanted to do it for a long time before they settled on Gov. Whitmer.”

The investigation began when Army veteran Dan Chappel joined a Michigan paramilitary group and became alarmed when he heard talk about killing police. He agreed to become an FBI informant and spent the summer of 2020 getting close to Fox and others, secretly recording conversations and participating in drills at “shoot houses” in Wisconsin and Michigan.

The FBI turned it into a major domestic terrorism case with two more informants and two undercover agents embedded in the group. Evidence showed the group had many gripes, particularly over stay-at-home orders and other pandemic restrictions imposed by Whitmer.

Fox, Croft and others, accompanied by the government operatives, traveled to northern Michigan to see Whitmer’s vacation home at night and a bridge that could be destroyed. Ty Garbin and Kaleb Franks, too, were on that ride. They pleaded guilty and testified for the prosecution.

Whitmer was not physically harmed; six men were arrested hours away from her home in October 2020.

David Porter, who leads the FBI in western Michigan, hailed the verdicts.

“Here in America, if you disagree with your government you have options. ... What you cannot do is plan or commit acts of violence,” he said outside the courthouse.

Defense attorneys tried to put the FBI on trial, repeatedly emphasizing through cross-examination of witnesses and during closing remarks that federal players were present at every crucial event and had entrapped the men.

Fox and Croft, they said, were “big talkers” who liked to smoke marijuana and were guilty of nothing but exercising their right to say vile things about Whitmer and government.

“This isn’t Russia. This isn’t how our country works,” Blanchard, Croft’s attorney, told jurors. “You don’t get to suspect that someone might commit a crime because you don’t like things that they say, that you don’t like their ideologies.”

Gibbons said the FBI isn’t supposed to create “domestic terrorists.” He described Fox, 39, as poor and living in the basement of a Grand Rapids-area vacuum shop, which was a site for meetings with Chappel and an agent.

Hours after the verdicts, U.S. District Judge Robert Jonker unsealed his Aug. 14 findings about a juror. Blanchard had disclosed early in the trial that his office took a call from someone who said the juror was eager to get picked and would vote to convict.

“The juror repeatedly and consistently denied making any such statements,” said Jonker, who, with staff, spoke to the person in private. “Based on the court’s observation of the juror’s demeanor and behavior, these responses were credible.”

In separate but related cases, eight other men linked to the kidnapping scheme are being prosecuted by the Michigan attorney general in state courts.

Whitmer in 2020 blamed Trump for stoking mistrust and fomenting anger over coronavirus restrictions and refusing to condemn hate groups and right-wing extremists like those charged in Michigan.

	On Aug. 6, three days before jury selection, Trump told conservative activists that the kidnapping plan was a “fake deal.”
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